"Death with Dignity" Means Genocide for the Poor — Stop AB 1592 (See page 4)

COMMEMORATOR

Published by the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party

Volume 9, Number 1 **Suggested Donation $1.50** **August 1999**

West Oakland Fights for a Future for All

Oakland, CA — After participating in a four-month series of "community input" meetings on the future of West Oakland — birthplace of the Black Panther Party, where over 80 percent of the residents are African-American low-income workers, unemployed and retired people — a delegation from Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party (CCBPP) walked out in protest at the February 20 forum on West Oakland redevelopment convened by the San Francisco Foundation and funded by the William and Flora Packard Foundation. The Packard group — with the avid support of Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown — is dangling $4.5 million under the noses of any groups that are willing to assist them in redeveloping West Oakland into an upper and middle income commuter bedroom community. Brown has announced his goal of moving out the "undesirables" from West Oakland and replacing them with people who now live in the suburbs who have jobs in the city. This initiative would displace the poor from the area, which developers now refer to as the "gateway to San Francisco," given its convenient location near BART and the SF-Oakland Bay Bridge.

The February 20 walkout by members and supporters of CCBPP and other community organizations happened when "workshop" leaders cut off speakers who demanded written commitments to provide for the housing and income needs of all the current residents of West Oakland.

The San Francisco Foundation, as of February 1999, had already spent over $113,000 on its own administrative costs over the first few months of the "planning phase" for the redevelopment initiative. Oakland Citizen Council for Urban Renewal (OCCUR) and National Economic.

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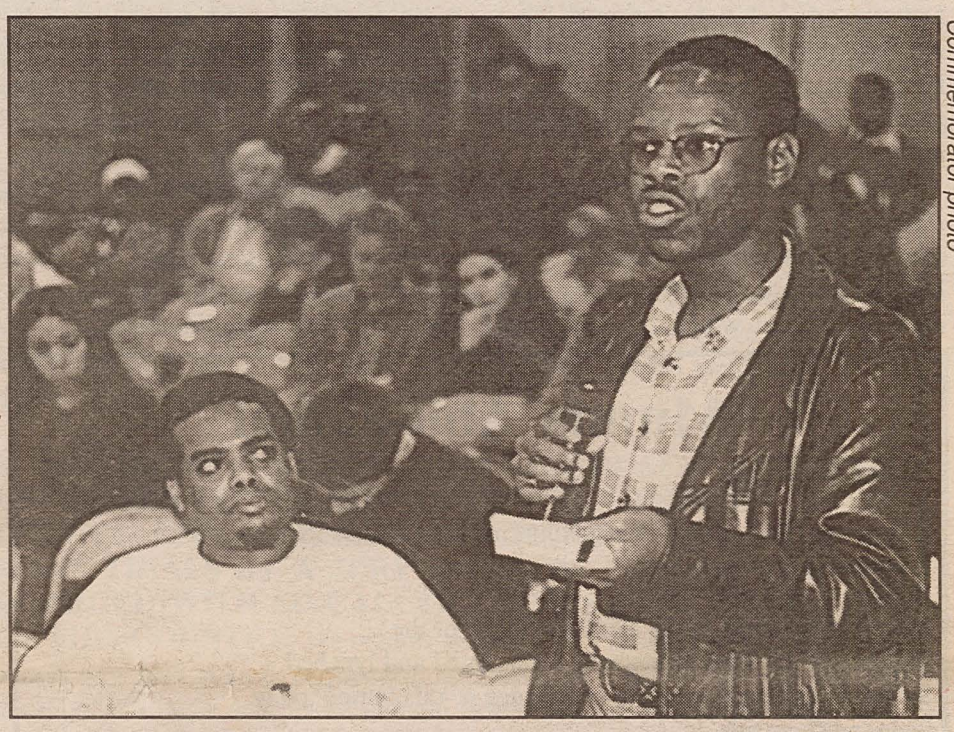
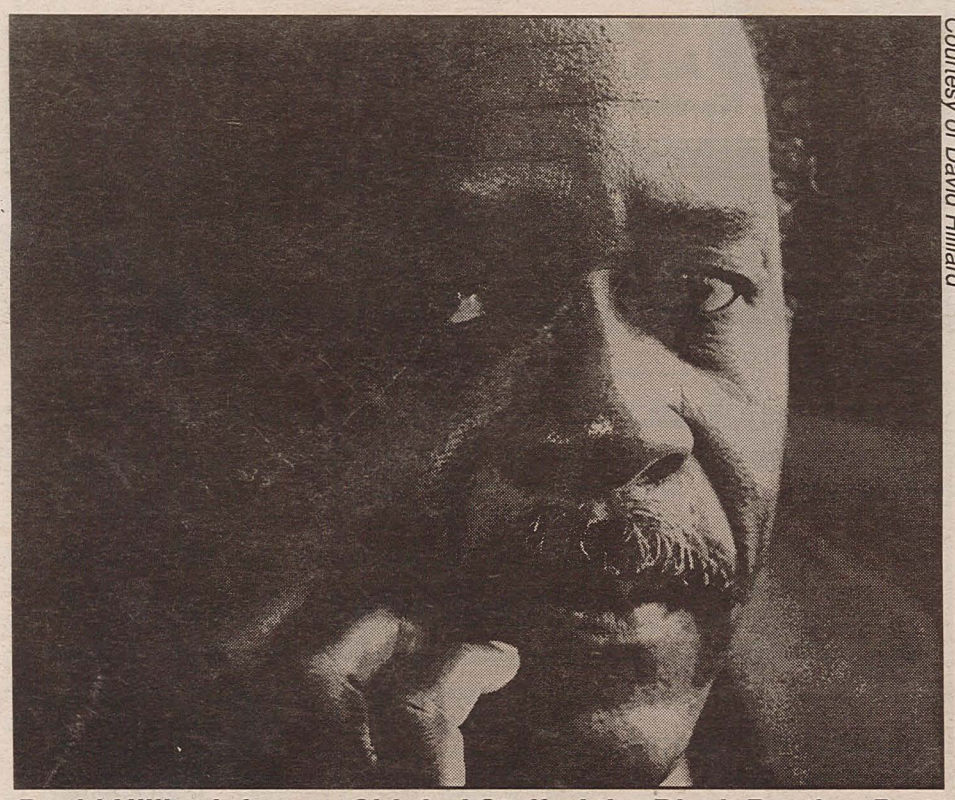


Commemorator photo

Will Oliver joined other West Oakland residents to demand that all community redevelopment projects provide for <u>all</u> the housing and income needs of West Oakland residents and <u>not</u> displace the area's poor and minority working families.

David Hilliard, Former BPP Leader, Bids for West Oakland Council Seat



Courtesy of David Hilliard

David Hilliard, former Chief of Staff of the Black Panther Party and candidate for West Oakland's Third District.

Editor's Note: After Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale founded the Black Panther Party in 1966, the organization began to pursue a program of community education and self-defense consistent with Point Number Seven of its Ten Point program which said "We want an immediate end to police brutality and murder of black people, other people of color, all oppressed people inside the United States."

Party members patrolled the streets of Oakland's poor neighborhoods. This program expanded to include other predominately black areas in other East Bay cities to protect the black and minority populations from police brutality and terror. Armed Black Panther citizen patrols would position themselves at a "safe" distance from policemen who had stopped someone on the street.

Following the example set by Huey, Panthers would hold up a law book and cite the codes to these police officers to ensure they knew any violations of law were not going to go unnoticed and would not be tolerated. When there was an arrest, the Panther patrols followed the police vehicles to the jail and immediately posted bail. Black Panther Party rules for patrol members required that they act within legal bounds at all times. Police, as Huey P. Newton describes in his book, Revolutionary Suicide, *were initially frightened by BPP patrols. As the idea and action of armed self-defense spread, the Black Panther patrols gained in membership and support in the community, and police began to retaliate by harassment and escalation of confrontations with the patrols.*

In April of 1967, a delegation of Black Panther Party members, openly and legally bearing weapons, went to thestate capitol building in Sacramento to protest the Republican Assemblyman

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Editorial

Behind Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky:

Peeping Under the Corporate Media's Covers

While reactionary intercommunal forces (those with international corporate ruling class interest — less than two percent of the world population) dominated public news information for over a year with the Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky Soap Opera, police repression has been increasing throughout the country. In just one example, four white plainclothes policemen, members of the New York City Police Department, killed an unarmed West African immigrant with a 41-shot barrage on February 4, spurring daily protests in New York City and outrage around the world.

What follows is the backdrop to the *Bill and Monica Show*: police are increasing their attacks against poor blacks, Hispanics, foreign-born and other minorities while, on a broader level — and within the same class — the country's poor and low-income people are battered by the federal government's welfare and workfare laws. Both serve to benefit the pocketbooks of the international ruling class, attacking the same strata of poor and low-income people both physically and financially. Joint efforts by the government and private sectors bring more urban redevelopment, driving the poor from their homes and transforming entire neighborhoods into real estate beyond the reach of the working poor; a form of economic segregation — if you can pay, you can play. Then there is the rapidly growing prison industrial complex — the fastest growing industry in the world today — that generates an even higher yield of profits for the very same international ruling class.

So we can see through the media highlights, whether they be the titillating *Bill and Monica Show*, or the latest sensational story bombarding our TV screens, newspapers and popular magazines to distract us from seeing and responding to the cause of the real dangers both in the present and our near future. To avoid such pitfalls and dangers is a revolutionary challenge. To effectively fight these attacks, while advancing the demands and calls to action of our class of poor and oppressed workers and minority peoples everywhere, requires revolutionary commitment and perseverance.

The all consuming media saturation with the Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky Soap Opera was an effort to deflect public attention from the economic and social dangers that lie ahead. We must act now, because, as the global economic crisis deepens toward worldwide collapse, the United States government is desperately trying to stave off disaster by granting tax breaks to major corporations, creating ever-cheaper sources of labor and fomenting wars to keep industry and big business profitable. The Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party and *The Commemorator* urge all those concerned with the continued attack on workers here and internationally to take up this challenge.

According to the government's own figures, some $1.5 trillion tax dollars are going into warehousing poor people through the prison industrial complex, enterprise zones and other redevelopment schemes which only benefit corporations while pushing the working poor into greater poverty and homelessness. In a capitalist crisis, commodified labor is cheap, and becomes increasingly cheaper. With underemployment and unemployment on the rise due to bankruptcies, mergers, corporate relocation and domestic forced work programs, the working class loses the power of labor organization. The railroad magnate Jay Gould put it plainly in 1886. He said "I can hire one-half of the working class to kill the other." If he was saying it in 1999, he would say "I can hire one-half of the working class to replace the other at less pay."

These conditions have brought the world to its present, dangerous stage, where life is ultra-cheap. While

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Mumia Abu-Jamal

by Bob Randolph

It is not just the name of a black journalist in Philadelphia.
It is a name among giants.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is the symbolic name of the
millions of Africans kidnapped, transported and lynched
for three centuries, with the knowledge of this buried today
under perfume ads.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is the name for all those
cheated by capitalism,
by racism,
by sexism,
by the twisting to strangulation of
working people who want a better life —
with leisure to build their cultures,
to learn from one another.

Mumia Abu-Jamal is a tragic
circumstance in American life,
that the enormous cosmic wrongs
cannot be discerned by ordinary people,
that they can only see it through the story
of this Mumia of Philadelphia,
this personal story that is
a facet of the whole lens of life,
the lens that would tell the whole story.

It is the symbolic name
for the struggle to defend
the innocent people of Iraq and Yugoslavia —
with their water supplies, their electricity,
their sewers in ruins, their hospitals like skeletons,
their streets like ruins on Mars, houses without toilets,
without heat or cooling. They are nations on death paths,
all designed by America,
those whom Mumia exposed through his life.
It is like the judge that
condemned him to death condemned the people of
Iraq and Yugoslavia to death.

Mumia is our battle cry,
for him and for every other struggle,
for the fullness of life for working people
and for the oppressed of every continent,
for the oppressed on the islands of every sea.

Let him be our battle cry,
in which at last we find redemption
for all ourselves,
for all the natural world . . .

Opinions and positions taken in articles with bylines are those of their writer. The views expressed in the bylined editorial and opinion piece published by The Commemorator *do not necessarily indicate its endorsement or support. — The Editor*

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COMMEMORATOR

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"SERVING ALL OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES"

Volume 9, Number 1, August, 1999, Oakland, California

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The mobilization to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal held April 24, 1999 included the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) striking from Los Angeles, California to Seattle, Washington in solidarity with the campaign for a new trial.

The Second Rise of Black Conservatism

©1998 Mumia Abu-Jamal

"The colonialist bourgeoisie is helped in its work of calming down the natives by the inevitable religion. All the saints who have turned the other cheek, who have forgiven trespasses against them, and who have been spat on and insulted without shrinking are studied and held up as examples."

—Frantz Fanon,
The Wretched of the Earth (1966)

Throughout the nation one cannot ignore the repeated projection of so-called "Black Conservatives" (as if Black folks here have a damn thing to conserve—besides their oppression) as the leaders of distinction, and proper "role models" for the great masses of people in the African-American community to follow.

One hears voices now that are indistinguishable from those of the ruling elite, and as such, they become echoes of the expressions of the white elite, in black-face. They thereby join the incessant drumbeat against the Black community, dark echoes of every supposed pathology that is said to be the exclusive fault of those who reside within Black ghettoes. In their perspective, the poor are responsible for their poverty, and their poorness is a kind of defect of character, or worse, a kind of sin.

The very notion that space, or more to the point, the uses of space, are determined by the system's laws, seems lost to them, and anathema. But it was law, the legal expressions of state power, that built the walls around ghettoes, and constructed the psychic walls of mental ghettoes of race that surrounds us all. Legal scholar I.F. Haney-Lopez writes:

"Law, then, constructs racial differences on several levels through the promulgation and enforcement of rules that determine permissible behaviour. The naturalization laws governed who was and was not welcome to join the polity, and anti-miscegenation laws regulated sexual relations, and segregation laws that told people where they could and could not live and work. Together, such laws altered the physical appearances of this country's people, attached racial identities to certain types and features and ancestry, and established material conditions of belonging and exclusion that code as race."

—Prof. I.F. Haney-Lopez,
White By Law. . . (1996)

Through a program of blaming the victim, such conservatives blame the people for their lack of power and influence.

At the end of the U.S. Civil War, after Reconstruction was savagely reduced to the silenced rubble of history, Afro-Americans saw a rise in the spirit of conservatism, a reflection, by Black businessmen, of the chilling and repressive climate that greeted so-called "freedmen," and they adapted to it, by going along with it. Historian

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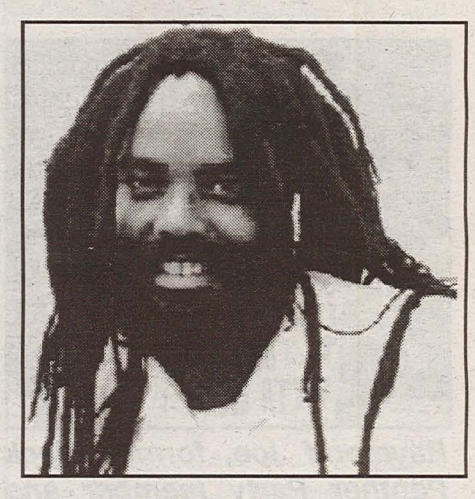
The Snitch Factor



©1999 by Mumia Abu-Jamal

"Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it."

—Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth (1966)*

In the history of every oppressed people, there was one figure who earned the hatred and enmity of that community. This was always the Snitch.

Throughout the long, tortured centuries of oppression against Blacks in America, a special contempt was reserved for those who dared snitch against the endangered slave community, people who made their "livings" by selling out their own people, sending information to dreaded slave-catchers in the South, who used the infamous Fugitive Slave Act to track and re-enslave those who dared escape their fiendish clutches.

In the age of the so-called Drug War, the snitch has truly come of age.

In 1800, a slave named Gabriel Prosser, his wife, and his brothers, organized a far-reaching rebellion that gathered some 1,000 rebels who were bent on waging an armed assault on Richmond, Virginia. The plot was betrayed by two snitches, Tom and Pharaoh, and the resultant revolt ended in failure. At least 35 rebels were hanged.

The brilliant Denmark Vesey's Revolt in Charleston, South Carolina was spoiled by one snitch. One hundred and thirty-one conspirators were arrested, and 37 of them, including Vesey, were hanged.

In the summer of 1740, another major conspiracy was wiped out around the city of Charles Town, South Carolina. A slave traitor told all that he knew to the slaveholders a full day in advance of the revolt, and when nearly 200 rebellious slaves gathered "together in Defiance" they were beaten and recaptured. Half escaped. At least fifty of the Africans were caught and hanged, in batches of ten a day, the better "to intimidate the other negroes" [Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (1943/1993), p. 189]. The Snitch, Peter, was rewarded with "a suit of Clothes, hat shoes, & stockings & 20 pounds in cash" [Aptheker, p.77].

In our own era, the late 1960s and 1970s saw members of the Black Panther Party, like the revered Fred Hampton and Capt. Mark Clark, slain in their apartment building in Chicago by killer cops who were helped by an "informer" (snitch) : William O'Neal, who provided floorplans, sleeping places, and security details of the home. He was well-placed for that dastardly mission, as he was security lieutenant for the chapter. He served Fred and other key Panthers soft drinks reportedly laced with secobarbital, making them unable to respond to the deadly raid in the night. He duly received a bonus, of perhaps $300—today's equivalent of thirty pieces of silver, it seems.

In the age of the so-called Drug War, the snitch has truly come of age.

In popular culture (at least in the version projected on the idiot box) snitching has been portrayed as hip, as "in," as an OK thing to do from the pimp-dressing Huggy Bear of Starsky and Hutch infamy; to the latest personification, they have made

The Snitch, Peter, was rewarded with "a suit of Clothes, hat shoes, & stockings & 20 pounds in cash"

snitching virtually acceptable. Young generations of African Americans, unmindful of their legacy of resistance against the slavery system, don't understand that snitching is not cool.

In the Jewish law (halakha), there were few crimes one could commit against their community that was worse than snitching. Scholar Adin Steinsaltz noted that "Anyone bearing tales against others to the alien authorities...places himself outside of the law by his action, and members of the community are permitted and even encouraged to kill him." *[The Essential Talmud]*

They are a scourge, even now, that are a threat to our freedom.

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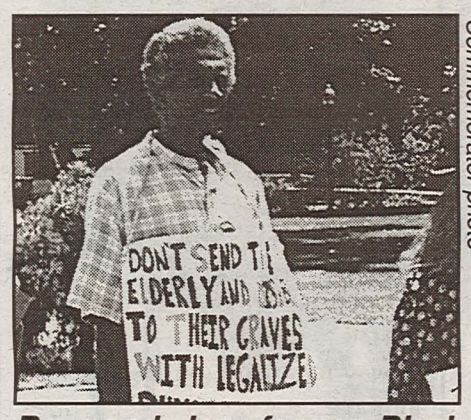
California Grass-roots Campaign Fights to Stop Physician Assisted Suicide Bill



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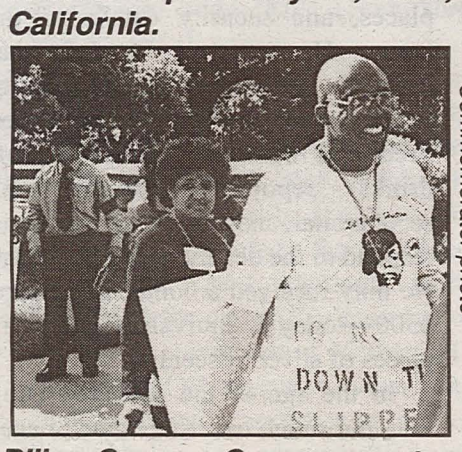
Raymond Joe, former Black Panther Party member and organizer for its Ten Point Program, walks informational picket line to stop legalization of physician-assisted suicide at state capitol May 19, 1999, California.



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Billy Goree, Commemorator volunteer, is among those who urged legislators to refuse to go down the slippery slope of legalized murder of the poor, disabled, elderly and minorities.

Commemorator photo

Reverend Lorenzo Carlisle of Oakland Community United Church of Christ spoke out against AB 1592 to the Appropriations Committee and walked the informational picket line May 19, 1999.

Sacramento, CA — On May 19, 1999, over 200 California delegates, including volunteers from the Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party (CCBPP) converged on the state capitol to urge Assembly members to kill Assembly Bill 1592, the physician-assisted suicide bill authored by Berkeley Democratic representative Dion Aroner.

"Poor and minority workers joined medical professionals, religious and community organizations throughout the state to build this grass-roots petitioning, speaking, letter-writing, phoning, and community meeting campaign to stop this genocidal bill and to organize caravans of people to picket the state capitol on the days when Assembly Committees were going to vote on the bill," said Melvin Dickson, CCBPP Chairman.

> ***"Our goal is the same as the Black Panther Party's goal was 32 years ago."***

"As a result of our efforts, the opposition resorted to underhanded political dealings," continued Dickson. "Their time was running out with less than 24 hours to pass the bill, or let it die in the Appropriations Committee. At 3:30 p.m. the Appropriations Committee Chair Carole Midgen told the grouping of AB 1592 opponents that the bill would not be voted on that day."

Dickson stated that after the delegations left the capitol, Assembly Speaker Antonio Villaraigosa "speakerized" two Appropriations Committee members by replacing two pledged "no" voters, Kevin Shelley (D-San Francisco) and Herb Wesson (D-Los Angeles) who were not informed of the vote, with two members who voted "yes," passing the bill 11 to 9.

Having power-brokered Committee approval, Aroner then stumbled in the face of growing opposition, first claiming she was not going to pursue pushing the bill through the general Assembly until next year, then placing it on the floor, then placing it in inactive status until January, 2000.

AB 1592 is based on Oregon's "Death with Dignity" Act passed in 1994 and placed on the Oregon Health Plan in February, 1998. An initial study showed the 15 people who committed suicide through the provisions of the law in 1998 did so out of fear of dependency and disability. Raymond Joe, CCBPP volunteer, stated, "Minorities and the poor know what it's like to live in fear of police terrorism, hunger, poverty, homelessness and untreated illness on a daily basis. The solution to this fear is not the legislated murder of AB 1592, but positive programs built to rid our communities of economic exploitation and political oppression."

Point six of the Ten-Point program demands, "We want completely free health care for all black and oppressed people. We believe the government must provide, free of charge, for the people, health facilities that will not only treat our illnesses, most of which have come about because of our oppression, but will also develop preventive medical programs to guarantee our future survival. We believe that mass health education and research programs must be developed to give all Black and oppressed people access to advanced scientific and medical information, so we may provide ourselves with proper medical attention and care."

CCBPP Medical Editor Tolbert Small, M.D. was at the heart of the Black Panther Party's sickle-cell anemia program, which, along with the free breakfast program, was designed to help low-income working families survive in the face of government oppression resulting in malnutrition, sickness and disease. Currently, seven million people in California alone have no medical coverage, making the idea that the poor have the right to "choose" to die not only ridiculous, but deadly. Managed care corporations profit by getting a lump sum of money from each of their policy holders then withholding payment for alleged unnecessary treatment or pain medication. As they compete for their share of the billions flowing through California's health care system, including $15 billion through the Medi-Cal system alone, they will pressure

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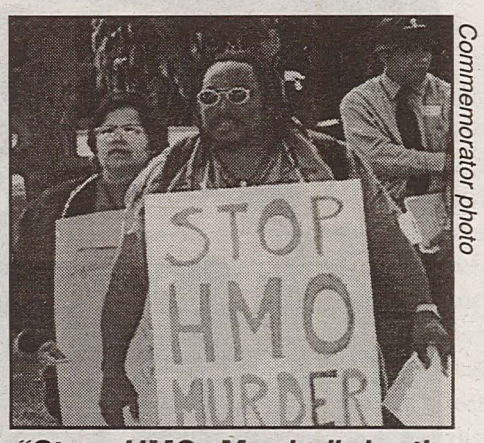
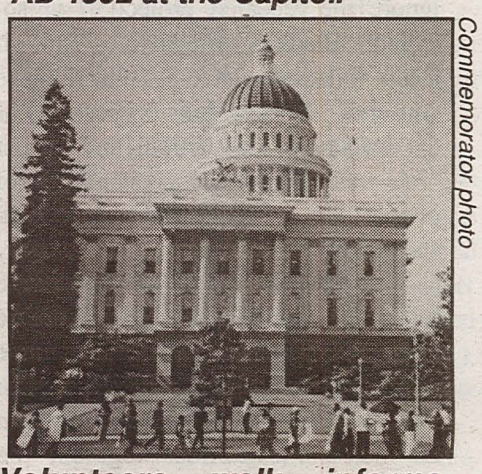


Commemorator photo

"Stop HMO Murder" is the crux of the fight against physician assisted suicide which targets low-income, minority and other uninsured workers and their families.

Commemorator photo

Jo Rosa, CCBPP volunteer, circulates a petition to California residents against AB 1592 at the Capitol.



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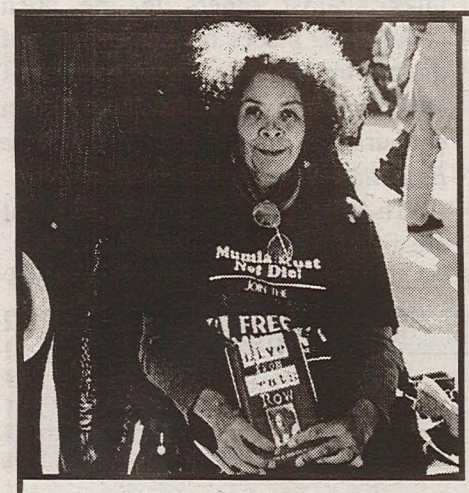
Volunteers walk informational picket line in front of capitol building with anti-AB 1592 posters on May 19, 1999.



JOIN US IN FIGHTING MODERN DAY GENOCIDE.
STOP Assembly Bill 1592,
the so-called "Death with Dignity" Act

"PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE" IS A DIRECT ATTACK ON POOR AND MINORITY COMMUNITIES

We demand free of charge health care to treat our illnesses and to meet our end-of-life needs...

THE TRUTH IS that the poor, minorities, disabled and foreign-born are denied basic medical diagnosis and treatment *daily*. Profit-hungry HMOs have taken over the health service contracts for most Medi-Cal and Medicare patients in California. Over SEVEN MILLION Californians have no medical coverage at all! 84% of those seven million are employed but have no health plan.

HMOs deny care to hundreds of thousands of poor and elderly patients — many people of color — because their bodies carry the ravages of poverty and so tend to need more health care at a greater cost and less profit to insurance companies and the medical industry than patients who have lived affluent lives.

WE OPPOSE legalization of "physician-assisted suicide" in a society in which the medical industry generates $1.5 trillion yearly in profits while the poor and minorities are denied basic preventive medical care, food and shelter. In this context, the idea that the poor have a "choice" is not only ridiculous, it is deadly.

Those now denied health care will soon instead be offered physician-assisted suicide

Commemoration Committee for The Black Panther Party
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Indecent Priorities

by Fred Hampton, Jr.

Get Your Priorities Straight. B4 your Priorities Get you Straight!
Imagine if half them negroes that are concerned about Clinton being impeached were to fake a pause for the cause and Demand that Bro. Mumia be Free.
Black bodies bound in camouflage vowing to fight and die overseas
These part-time patriots, that when called to commit for their own communities seem to be Absent Without Leave.
Peep the vines on them Penguins!
Top hats and Black tie, formal dress only. Being Black when it's beneficial.
High time we called a credential check on all Fake Frauds and phonies
Columbus this! George Washington that! Miseducated mothafuckas even knew when Lincoln died
O.K. you half-way ass history buffs, what happened Dec. 4, of '69?
Now, to the cats with the killa conversations. Who wonna bang with the brothas, but bow down with the pigs
How come with me you got a fucked up frown. But with them you sport a shit eating grin?
Don't be so ready to ride and die at the drop of a dime against your own kind.
Imagine the potential of our people if them tribes suddenly became politicized
Pardon me Sir, Oh! and you too Madam at the thousand dollar plate and the million dollar ball
Somehow you seem to hear everything else. But become dead and deaf when yo' peoples call.
In fact you the same mothafuckas who cried and patronized with the loss of Princess Di
But yet remained remote and silent to Philadelphia May 13, of '85
Have you checked the charts Mr. Charity? We're the #1 endangered species
While you provide wishes for whales, support the seals and trip and make speeches 'bout saving the trees
And finally to you African-"American" ass clowns dressed in red and white and blue
Hollin' happy July 4th! What the fuck that got to do with me and you!?

Uhuru!

— Chairman Fred Hampton, Jr. P.O.C.C./N.P.D.U.M.

Hands off Assata! Free Mumia Abu-Jamal and All Political Prisoners, Prisoners of War and Prisoners of Conscience alike!
My contact is:
Fred Hampton, Jr.-aka-Alfred Johnson #B-42954
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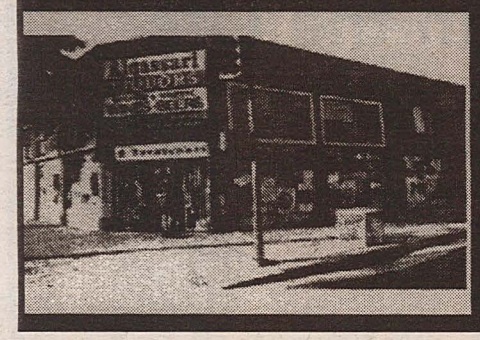

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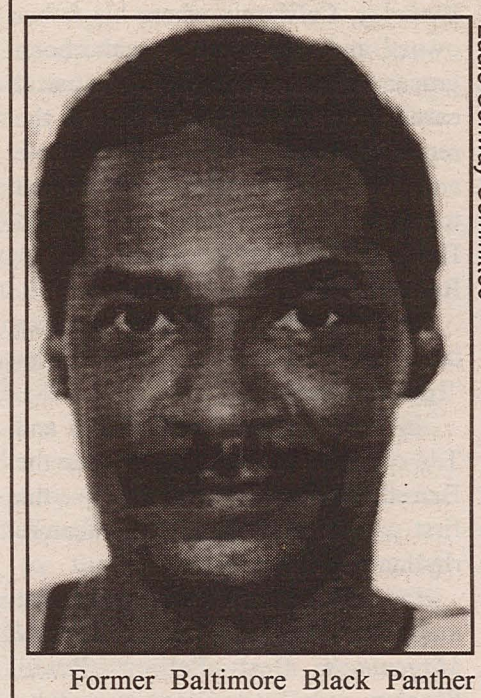
Political Prisoner

Eddie Marshall Conway Serves 29 Years for a Crime He Did Not Commit



Eddie Conway Committee

Former Baltimore Black Panther leader, Eddie Marshall Conway, has been unjustly imprisoned since 1970 for a crime he says he did not commit.

Conway states, "I am a political prisoner in the State of Maryland. I did not receive a fair trial because of the political climate against the Black Panther Party in 1970. I have now served over 28 years in the Maryland Prison System. In 1970, as a member of the Black Panther Party, I was framed for the murder of a Baltimore City policeman, and the shooting of two other city police officers. I am innocent.

"Over the past 28 years, a group of supporters have been working for my release. We have struggled through the court process, and not received justice. We have progressed through the parole process. I have met all the requirements necessary to receive parole and then, without warning, they changed the rules. We have now reached an impasse that can only be overcome with mass support."

Eddie Conway contends his was just one name on a long list of COINTELPRO victims. For his part, Eddie has remained strong, providing leadership in inmate councils and coordinating meaningful programs for other inmates. He actively conducts legal research to aid his and others' defense. The legal work around Conway's case continues. Two committees, The Marshall Eddie Conway Support Committee and Friends of Marshall Eddie Conway, working closely with Eddie, have reached out broadly in the community and on the campuses.

Conway was a militant BPP member from the moment he joined the Baltimore (Maryland) chapter in 1969. According to former Baltimore Panther leader Paul Coates, the party "grew because it hit a responsive chord in the community, which was police brutality."

"Eddie, myself and other young Black women and men joined the party seeking an organizational vehicle to end the exploitation and degradation of black people. We were frustrated by the limited success of the civil rights movement and the government assassinations of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. We united to actively change 'the system,' by any means necessary."

It all started for Conway in 1966, in Germany, where he was serving in the U.S. Army. That year, he saw a play about Malcolm X.

Political and Serious

"It got me wondering who this guy was, what he was all about," Conway said. "Then his autobiography came out and I read it. That's the point when I became political."

Disillusioned with the Army, Conway returned to his hometown of Baltimore, Maryland, in September of 1967, having received an Honorable Discharge. He joined the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE).

Integrating the Sparrows Point, Maryland, Fire Department was one of CORE's primary projects. (Sparrows Point is the home of the giant Bethlehem Steel Mill.) Conway estimates that about 70% of the department were Ku Klux Klan sympathizers.

"Being one of the first blacks in the Fire Department, I had a real experience with organized racism," Conway recalls. "It kind of pushed me to a more militant stand in order to just maintain employment. That made me realize that it was time to do something more serious."

Seriousness for Conway came in the form of the Black Panther Party (BPP). In April of 1969, Conway joined the Baltimore chapter.

Conway was arrested in 1970 and framed for murder one year after he joined. This was at the same time when Panthers in the New York chapter were arrested or became fugitives. Conway's arresting officer testified that the arrest warrant was obtained based on information provided by a FBI informant. During the 1960s, the FBI, under J. Edgar Hoover, carried out the COINTELPRO (Counter-Intelligence Program) aimed at disrupting and destroying black and politically organized dissent. Targeting the black liberation movement, one of its stated goals was "to prevent the rise of a Black Messiah."

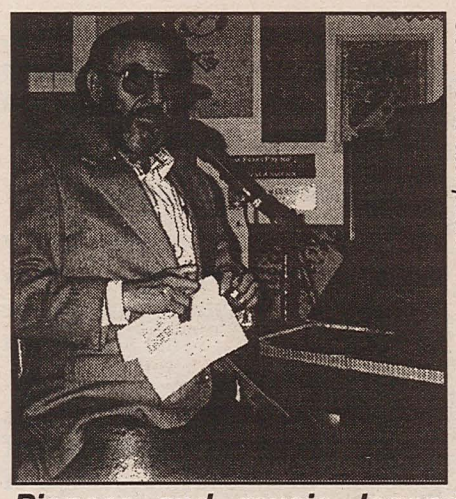
BPP chapters were attacked from coast-to-coast. Chicago Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark were murdered in a police raid in 1969 and geronimo jiJaga Pratt was falsely imprisoned in California for an alleged murder. Many other black and political organizations were targeted for disruption. In 1970, Hoover called the Panthers "the biggest threat to national security." (See August, 1998 *The Commemorator,* "Chicago Citizens Combat COINTELPRO-style Police Power").

No Evidence

According to prosecution attorney Peter Ward, "The greatest difficulty in the state's case [against Conway] was that we didn't have any direct evidence and we didn't have an eye witness. There were a lot of incriminating circumstances that we had to tie together to form a total picture." In

Continued on page 20

Artist Corner: Johnny Otis



Commemorator photo

Pioneer and music legend Johnny Otis teaching black music at Ashkenaz in Berkeley, California.

The Commemorator had the pleasure of attending a "Black Music" class in March on the African-American musician tradition given by pioneer and living musical legend, musician, songwriter, producer and radio personality — Johnny Otis. Classes are currently held at the Ashkenaz Community Center in Berkeley and upcoming classes will be held at other San Francisco Bay Area locations such as Kimball's East and San Francisco State University. There Otis will dispense treasures of performance and innovation of black music history to his unfailingly appreciative students and audience.

"Soul music and blues music are similar in that they both tell a story and tell the truth," Otis explained to his Berkeley class. "Soul music gives a rather different account of the story and a somewhat different version of the truth. As with blues, the major function of soul music is catharsis."

"Soul music and blues music are similar in that they both tell a story and tell the truth."

Students and guests clearly enjoy Otis' classes which are often comprised of several musical sets. Special guest performances enhance Otis' instructionals. After a set by a guest musician at a recent class session, Johnny Otis took his place at the piano. His dignified posture brought back clear memories of him in the early days of television, the mid-1950s — the peak of his commercial career.

Otis was born December 28, 1921 in Vallejo, California. He grew up in a predominantly black neighborhood in Berkeley, California where his father owned and operated a neighborhood grocery store. He began his musical career in 1939 and, at the recommendation of Nat "King" Cole and Jimmy Witherspoon, Otis moved to Los Angeles. There he joined Harlan Leonard's Kansas City Rockets at the Club Alabama.

By 1945, he was leading his own band, and had his first big hit with "Harlem Nocturne."

In 1948 he joined with Bardu and Tila Ali and Johnny Miller to open the Barrelhouse in Los Angeles — the first nightclub to exclusively feature rhythm and blues.

In 1950, Otis had ten songs that made the Top Ten on *Billboard Magazine's* Best Selling Retail Rhythm and Blues Caravan, and he became the hottest musical attraction in black America.

In the early 1950's, remaining active as a writer, performer and producer, Johnny began a radio career and became one of the most popular disc jockeys in southern California. His early radio broadcast success led to a weekly Los Angeles television variety show, "The Johnny Otis Show," which ran for eight years. His career has now spanned over 50 years.

Otis discovered many now legendary rhythm and blues singers such as Esther Phillips, Willie Mae "Big Momma" Thornton, and Etta James and the Robins — who later evolved into the Coasters — who were each, at one time, featured vocalists in his band. He both performed in and produced the original recording of "Hound Dog" with "Big Momma" Thornton, played on Johnny Ace's "Pledging My Love" recording, and produced some of Little Richard's earliest recordings.

Always in the vanguard of his genre, Johnny recorded and played with such rhythm and blues pioneers as Big Joe Turner, Gatemouth Moore, Amos Milburne, Richard Berry, Joy Liggins, Roy Milton, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, Charles Brown, and Louis Jordan on his own Blue Spectrum label. Johnny played the drums on Charles Brown's first major hit "Driftin' Blues" in 1946. He also recorded with Illinois Jacquet and Lester Young. One of the many highlights of his long career was when he performed as a drummer with the great Count Basie Orchestra.

Intimately familiar with the development of jazz, rhythm and blues and soul music, Otis talks to his audience about soul music: "Black singers and disc jockeys maintain that soul music is the synthesis between gospel music and blues," Otis tells his class. "In the case of Aretha Franklin and James Brown, they are 'in church,' a holiness church, where everybody's getting the beat, getting the feeling. James Brown urges his audience to 'feel good' and 'get the feeling' as he directs the mood with songs like "Say It Loud — I'm Black and I'm Proud,' 'I Feel Good,' and ' I Got the Feeling.' Like the lead singer in a gospel group, he sings, 'Hey, I Feel Alright' and invites the audience to voice their response. Other musicians encourage audiences to clap their hands, a feature of gospel music."

Otis's most significant songwriting credits include, "Every Beat of My Heart," (a song he wrote originally for Jackie Wilson, but was made a hit by Gladys Knight and the Pips), "Roll With Me Henry" (also known as "The Wallflower"), "So Fine," and "Willie and the Hand Jive," which sold over one million copies.

Commemorator photo

Johnny Otis (at piano) plays with local band, demonstrating to his students the kind of music he performs best.

In addition to performing, writing, and producing his work in radio and television, Otis entered the political scene when, during the 1960's, he served as Deputy Chief of Staff to Mervin Dymally, whose career he followed from the California State Assembly, to the State Senate, then into the Lieutenant Governorship of California and up to the United States Congress.

Otis has written several books. The first, published in 1968, was "Listen to the Lambs," and was about the 1964 race riots. "Upside Your Head! Rhythm and Blues on Central Avenue" came out in 1993. Many of his paintings, sculptures and wood carvings are displayed today in "Colors and Chords—The Art of Johnny Otis" published in 1995

Johnny has been inducted into the Rhythm and Blues and Rock & Roll Halls of Fame. The Archives of African-American Music and Culture at the University of Indiana has catalogued hundreds of hours of his past radio shows for interviews, commentary, insight and historical significance. He remains active as a performer and in the recording studio, where he is working on his latest album. His 1994 release, "Spirit of the Black Territory Bands" on Arhoolie Records, received a Grammy nomination.

To this day, Otis is tremendously productive in his poly-dimensional contributions to the continued development and growth of African-American music of all kinds.

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Letters to the Editor

Letter from Johnny Otis

Dear Editor,

Thanks for asking me to put in my little two cents worth. I'll do my best to be helpful. First, I want to tell you how proud I was in the 60's when the men and women of the Black Panther Party were shaking up the establishment by serving the community with strong and compassionate programs. I was living in Los Angeles and spending a lot of time on the road with my band. Occasionally, we played the Bay Area, but not that often, because that was a time when the whites, Jefferson Airplane, Grateful Dead, the Beatles, and the Rolling Stones had gained prominence and we were not that popular anymore.

Sly Stone was strong, but in my opinion not much more was happening of any real consequence on the African American music scene in Northern California during that time.

The Panther Party came into existence because Black folks were struggling against racism that kept most people of our community in poverty and without hope.

If ever we need a strong and active Black Panther Party, the time is now. We have a few people doing very well and yes, we have built up a small middle class, but the average member of the Black community is in bad shape. Most of our young men are in prison and those who are not are unemployed.

The questions you have asked require that we start examining the causes of our plight and leave the effects to the social sciences and the theorists of the American establishment. The political leaders and the apologists for our government will continue to form committees to study the problems and the columnists and editors of the daily press, the radio and television commentators will continue to pontificate and tip toe around the actual facts.

Melvin, I am absolutely convinced that we live in a distorted and corrupt society. This means all citizens are damaged, but of course, African Americans bear the brunt.

When ninety percent of the nation's wealth is in the hands of ten percent of the population (as it is here in America) we can't expect to have any real democracy. The legislators of the country are bought and sold. We live in a system of corporate oligarchy ... actually, not far from a form of American fascism.

The corporate heads and multi-millionaires are white persons of the power structure who don't give a damn about democracy or fair play, and they surely don't care about Black, Latino or Asian people or Women.

We are the only industrialized western nation that practices capital punishment, and it doesn't take a genius to realize who gets wiped out most of the time. I wound up behind bars in L. A. a few years ago, and all I saw were Black and Mexican Americans. If a person didn't know better, they would look at that and think ... hey, white folks don't commit any crimes. America is one of the few nations in the developed world that doesn't provide medical care for its citizens. African American babies suffer infant mortality four times more than the majority.

With all the cards stacked against them, is it any wonder that African American musical artistry has gone down hill? I hear beautiful music being produced by African American artists today ... jazz, gospel, blues, rap, hip hop, etc., but not as much like in the 30's, 40's 50's and 60's when black creativity was in full flower.

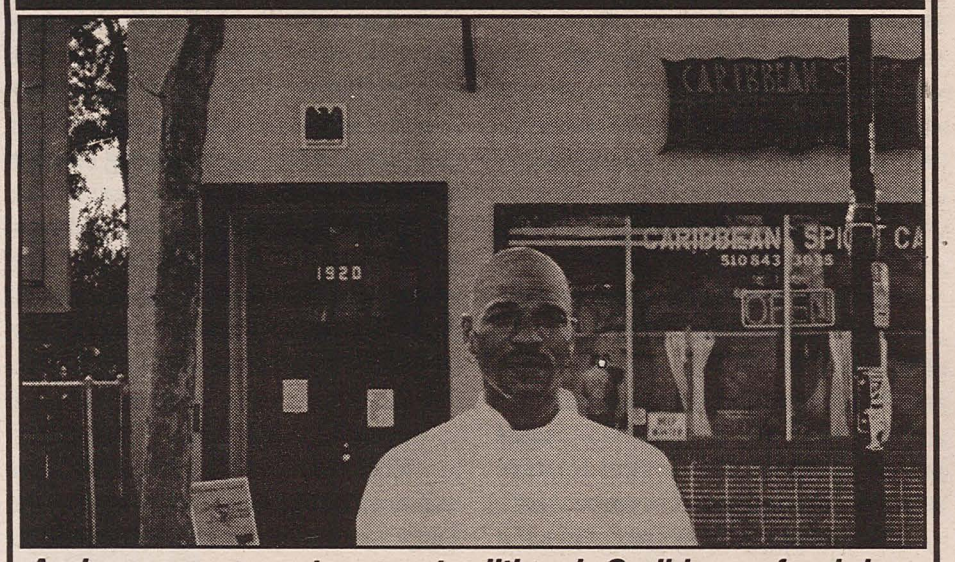
I am sometimes called an old fogie in this respect, but let me ask you this, where are the artists of today who can compare to Duke Ellington, Lester Young, Billie Holiday, Lightnin' Hopkins, Mahalia Jackson, The Swan Silvertones, Count Basie, Dinah Washington, early Aretha Franklin and Ray Charles, The Drifters, The 4 Tops, The Temptations, Louis Armstrong, Louis Jordan, Bessie Smith, Art Tatum, Professor Alex Bradford, Nat King Cole, Jimmy Lunceford, Clara Ward??? There are a few, but as I said, not many.

As individuals ... alone, none of us can relieve the situation that afflicts the black people of this racist, predatory capitalist country, that's why I hope the Black Panther Party can grow stronger and stronger, and pull our people together and stand up to the establishment.

Love,
Johnny Otis

Caribbean Spice

Restaurant and Club



Andre serves customers traditional Caribbean food in a Caribbean motif.

The *Caribbean Spice Restaurant* known for its authentic Caribbean food has just celebrated four years in business.The restaurant is nestled in the heart of West Berkeley north of University Avenue at 1920 San Pablo Avenue.

Andre enjoys welcoming his customers and making them feel at home. Andre is usually in the kitchen preparing one of his special home cooked meals, while another member of the close-knit *Caribbean Spice* team is graciously assisting their customers while they wait for their meal. The *Caribbean Spice* menu features Halal and vegetarian dishes, and many of the herbs and vegetables from the restaurant's own garden. Andre hopes to only use their homegrown herbs, fruits and vegetables.

Many of their customers come to just sit, relax, converse and have an award winning Ginger Beer — a non-alcoholic beverage — while enjoying the scenic mural of a Caribbean beach on the stage wall of the restaurant and listening to Caribbean music and light Jazz. Some customers respond to their urge to dance.

The *Caribbean Spice* has hosted and sponsored several benefits and fund-raisers for the community, and this effort continues. The restaurant is now available for fundraising events on Friday and Saturday nights.

***Caribbean Spice* is now open for dining from noon to 3 PM and 5 PM to 10 PM Tuesday through Friday, noon to 10 PM on Saturday, and until 9 PM on Sunday.**

To make reservations, order take-out, or arrange catering or a fund-raising event, please:

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Huey's Corner

Stokely Carmichael and Executive Mandate No. 2

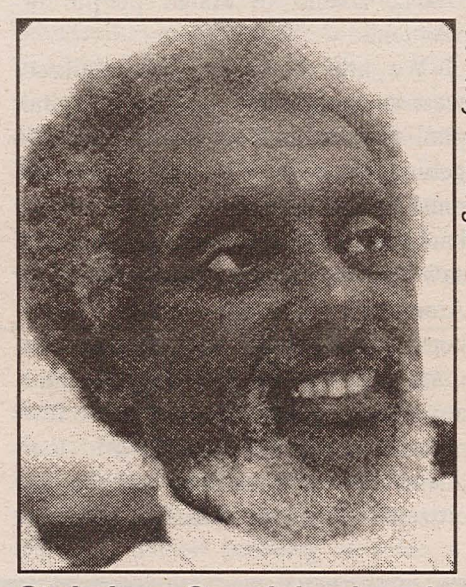
Editor's Note: The following excerpts are from Dr. Huey P. Newton's "Executive Mandate #2: June 29, 1967," (as printed in To Die for the People, published by Stronghold Consolidated Productions, Inc., 1972), and from the chapters "Growing Pains" and "Strategy" of Revolutionary Suicide, (published by Stronghold Consolidated Publications in 1973). These selections, both of which can be found at your local bookstore, tell of the Black Panther Party's attempts to ordain Stokely Carmichael of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee as Field Marshal and Prime Minister of the BPP, and the subsequent failed attempts of Huey and the BPP to merge with SNCC.

Huey, who wrote that this failure was "just as well" considering Stokely's failure to understand the need to unify not only the black people of the world, but to unite with revolutionaries of all nations, exploited people of all backgrounds, and especially those with the material ability to aid and assist those suffering under repression and oppression, criticized Carmichael in Revolutionary Suicide *for supporting a black police officer simply because he was black without consideration of his crimes against the people. Huey Newton correctly characterized Stokely's policy as racist. Newton also criticized him for support of reactionary regimes in Africa.*

Carmichael, aka Kwame Ture, who died on November 15, 1998 from prostate cancer in Conakry, Guinea, was born in Trinidad 57 years earlier. As a young child he lived with his grandmother until he was eleven when he joined his parents, a carpenter and taxi driver, and a steamship stewardess, in Harlem. They soon moved to the East Bronx where Carmichael attended the Bronx High School of Science before going on to study philosophy at Howard University, in Washington, D.C.

In 1960, while a student at Howard, Carmichael joined the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and became a Freedom Rider, challenging segregated interstate travel in the South, registering voters and setting up medical facilities. In 1964, during Freedom Summer, Carmichael joined the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) becoming one of its leaders as a field organizer in Lowndes County, Mississippi, where he helped to nearly quadruple the number of registered black voters, to the point that they exceeded the number of white voters registered in the county. Carmichael formed the Lowndes County Freedom Organization which used a black panther as its logo. This image was later adopted by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale, when they formed the Black Panther Party for Self Defense.

In 1966, Carmichael was elected chairman of SNCC and began to promulgate the slogan "Black Power," creating a rift from which that organization never fully recovered. Carmichael recruited young black Americans who were frustrated by the lack of real progress in their fight for freedom and equality, encouraging black separatism and black nationalism, which isolated thousands of white supporters and volunteers across the nation. During this period, Carmichael also traveled to Vietnam, China and Cuba. In 1969 Carmichael moved to Guinea, Africa, as the guest of then-president Sekou Toure, where he lived next door to the world for the remainder of his days.



Courtesy of Emerge

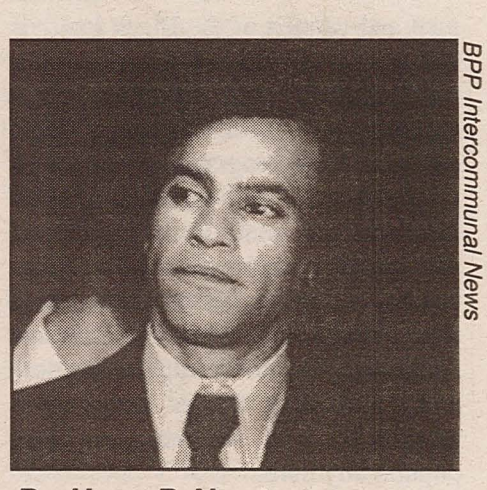
Stokely Carmichael aka Kwame Ture

Kwame Nkrumah, the first leader of independent Ghana who had been overthrown in a coup in 1966 and was granted political asylum in Guinea. Carmichael promoted Pan Africanism and was a speaker for the All African People's Revolutionary Party throughout the world for the remainder of his days.

In the following excerpts Newton at first recognizes Carmichael's leadership traits and "drafts" him into the Black Panther Party and appoints him to the rank of Field Marshal. In the second and later writing, Newton describes Carmichael's black nationalism. It is true that the black community needs unity. However, the primary thing most black people lack is money and the ability to earn it. Huey argues here, as he did repeatedly, that since non-whites in the United States and elsewhere are the last-hired, first-fired and lowest paid, unless all those who work for a living are united and organized to fight against class power along economic, class lines, instead of being organized along nationalist, racial, religious or other lines, a revolutionary movement cannot and will never be successful.

History has proven the correctness of this analysis time and time again. There are over 8,000 blacks who currently hold office in the United States, yet that hasn't improved conditions for the general population of African-Americans, or for low-income (minority or white) farm workers and service workers in the country. In fact, the United States has a higher percentage of its African-American population imprisoned than did South Africa at the height of the anti-apartheid movement. The economic gap between rich and poor, both in the United States and throughout the world is the widest it has ever been. Capitalism has created 477 billionaires, while infant mortality, imprisonment, poverty, lack of health care, starvation and bankruptcy are higher in the United States than any other industrialized nation.

As long as the race card can be played by those who control the world's resources, pitting black against whites, Asians, Latinos or Middle Eastern peoples, the poor will continue to fight over the crumbs capitalism doles out. That is the lesson Huey teaches us in his writings, in the positive, and Stokely taught us in his practice, in the negative. It is time we refuse to go down that road again and instead learn the lessons contained in Huey's writings. Join together to fight for living wage jobs, and decent working conditions and the Black Panther Ten Point Party Program today!.



BPP Intercommunal News

Dr. Huey P. Newton

Brother Stokely Carmichael:

Because you have distinguished yourself in the struggle for the total liberation of Black people from oppression in racist White America;

Because you have acted courageously and shown great fortitude under the most adverse circumstances;

Because you have proven yourself a true revolutionary guided by a great feeling of love for our people;

Because you have set such a fine example, in the tradition of Brother Malcolm, of dedicating your entire life to the struggle of Black Liberation, inspiring our youth and providing a model for others to emulate;

Because you have refused to serve in the oppressor's racist mercenary, aggressive war machine, showing that you know who your true friends and enemies are;

Because your new endeavor to organize and liberate the Crown Colony of Washington, D.C., will inevitably force you to confront, deal with, and conquer the racist Washington Police Department, which functions as the protector of the racist dog power structure that occupies the Black Community in the same manner and for the same reasons that the racist U.S. Armed Forces occupy South Vietnam;

You are hereby drafted into the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense, invested with the rank of Field Marshal, delegated the following authority, power, and responsibility:

To establish revolutionary law, order and justice in the territory lying between the Continental Divide East to the Atlantic Ocean; North of the Mason-Dixon Line to Canadian Border; South of the Mason-Dixon Line to the Gulf of Mexico.

... So Let It Be Done

*****

When we began to receive requests for assistance in starting new branches of the Party, we realized our need for more than courageous troops. We lacked an administrative body that could handle these requests and supervise a large-scale organization. The brothers on the block had none of the bourgeois skills needed for this. Yet these skills were necessary, even though we did not want bourgeois values, so we looked for ways to solve our administrative problems while continuing our work with the street brothers.

...I had to respect the Student Nonviolent Co-ordinating Committee (SNCC) for having some of the most disciplined organizers in the country. When we had first talked of forming a party, Bobby and I read about their work

Continued on page 14

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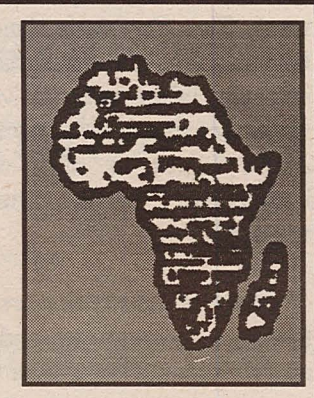
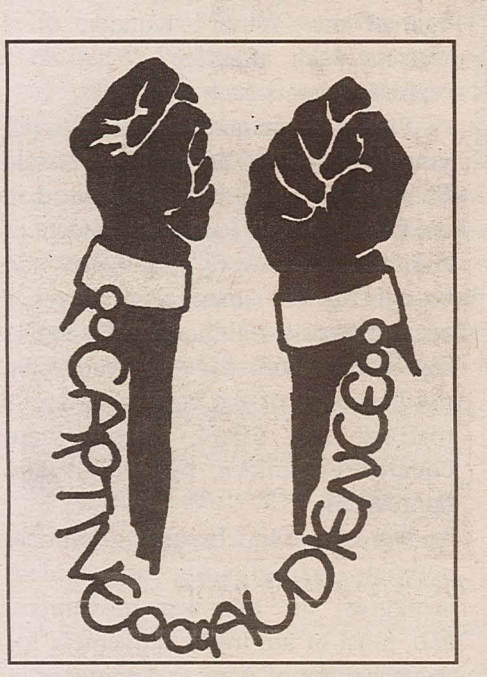


Captive Audience

Capitalism and Genocide



by John Donner

Brother Malcolm X (El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz) correctly taught us that not only is capitalism's nature that of a "vulture," it is also inseparable from institutional racialism. It includes among its birth factors the enslavement, murder, rape, robbery, kidnap and exploitation, *en masse*, of not only Native American Indians and black African slaves, but also of the working-class immigrants from Europe, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and every corner of the earth.

This same capitalism (now evolved to the level of global monopoly capitalism) is what today's fake or misguided leaders — operating under the false theory of going for a bigger-slice-of-the-pie-for-my-particular-group — continue to point to as the salvation of the race and class, duping the oppressed and exploited of every race into wrongly pursuing capitalist goals as their salvation.

But, *caveat emptor* ("let the buyer beware!") — capitalism's pie is baked with the worldwide blood and suffering of victims (the majority children, women and the elderly) crucified hourly on the "golden cross" of global monopoly capitalism. The victims (just as Joseph's biblical coat of many colors) reflect every conceivable race, ethnic background, nationality, skin shade, hue and color.

The not-free-just-cheap press (owned by the architects of institutional racialism) gives sensational coverage to any incident with even slight potential for fanning the flames of racial disunity, hatred and unrest that, in turn, threatens to engulf those who suffer under common conditions and methods of economic exploitation and social oppression. The flames are fed oxygen and gasoline vis-a-vis a continuing flow of media sound bites, articles, editorials, and forums on every racially provocative subject, from slavery reparations to hate crimes, from affirmative [re]action to racial quotas, to outright police murder and brutalization of minorities.

Remember! Institutional racialism functions to create a mind set of mislocated fear and hatred which prevents all economically exploited and socially oppressed people from uniting around an analysis of their common exploitation and oppression at the hands of global monopoly capitalism. Institutional racialism is engineered to divide all exploited and oppressed people into fragmented, weaker groups, divided based upon immaterial differences of race, ethnic background, religion, nationality, gender or anything that helps our mortal, avowed and common class enemy to divide and conquer us.

Throughout American history, race and socioeconomic status have formed legal grounds for denying both human and civil rights to specifically targeted populations. The law has been used as an essential part of the machinery which placed these exploited groupings under state-enforced genocide – that is, the deliberate and systematic destruction of a racial, political, economic or cultural group. What happened in Nazi Germany and apartheid-South Africa was just as legal under their laws as what happened to Native and African-Americans (including chattel slavery) under American law before and after the American ruling-class revolution.

Modern day genocide focuses on those peoples of every color who lack financial or organizational means of survival and who pose a threat to the accumulation of wealth by the international ruling class. The state machinery that motors genocide of the poor and unprofitable population groups comes in the form of laws and government policies that subject our people to conditions that predictably, and, therefore intentionally, cause our wholesale death or serious bodily and mental harm. These policies create circumstances calculated to cause our physical destruction, and/or the deliberate withholding of the means necessary for life itself, such as a viable income, medical treatment, food, shelter and other means of survival.

Massive government cuts in welfare, food stamps, public-subsidized housing and health care in conjunction with the emergence in Oregon (and the introduction in several other states) of full government funding of physician-assisted suicide for the poor instead of full funding for health care, attendant care services and pain management; provide excellent domestic examples of government enforced policies that add up to de facto state-sponsored genocide. The rising death toll among the homeless and those without sufficient means of survival is predictable under these conditions, and, therefore, intentional in a land that owns the assets and know-how to eliminate hunger, homelessness and preventable illnesses now taking the lives of our people.

U.S.-enforced export of genocidal policies abroad include global arms proliferation (the U.S. recently rejected a treaty outlawing land mines which kill and maim millions each year); economic sanctions and embargoes (such as those responsible for the otherwise easily preventable deaths of 239,000 Iraqi children since 1990); and the deliberate withholding of food resulting in millions dead or starving from famine (mass hunger organized by international monopoly capitalist forces) such as exists in North Korea or Sudan, the latter of which was also bombed by the U.S. in August, 1998.

International agreements guarantee (in theory) income adequate to maintain a decent standard of living as a protected human right. Each year billions of people throughout the world unnecessarily die and suffer unspeakable torment, tantamount to torture, due to policies of global monopoly capitalism, enforced by its lackeys, who are signatories to fake human rights agreements. The worldwide orgy of mass death and suffering that results from enforcing these policies is of Shakespearean, final act dimension and dwarfs World War II death and killing, even going beyond the horrors of the Nazi Jewish holocaust.

American History: A National Policy of Ruling Class Genocide

Brother Malcolm X taught us that the defining moments for America's ruthless ruling class include a national policy of genocide against the original Native American Indians inhabiting the land, which ultimately became the United States, by bloody force of arms.

Our nation was born in genocide when it embraced the doctrine that the original American, the Indian, was an inferior race. Even before there were large numbers of Negroes on our shores, the scar of racial hatred had already disfigured colonial society. From the sixteenth century forward, blood flowed in battles over racial supremacy. We are perhaps the only nation which tried as a matter of national policy to wipe out its indigenous population. *Moreover, we elevated that tragic experience into a noble crusade. Indeed, even today we have not permitted ourselves to reject or feel remorse for this shameful episode. Our literature, our films, our drama, our folklore all exalt it. Our children are still taught to respect the violence which reduced red-skinned people of an earlier culture into a few fragmented groups herded into impoverished reservations.*

Two-thirds of the original Native American Indians perished between 1519 and 1720 under socioeconomic systems of chattel slavery, involuntary servitude, peonage (debt slavery) and wage slavery enforced jointly by the Spanish Crown and Catholic Church. 60 million original Native American Indians perished between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries.

The original Native people were classified as animals according to official church doctrine, to be worked and treated as beasts of burden. It was not until June 2, 1537 that Pope Paul III issued a Papal Bull proclaiming the Native American Indian people to be *veri homines* — real men and women with souls. This did nothing, however, to end their diabolical exploitation and oppression as peons (debt slaves) and wage slaves. The early infrastructure for the California wine industry was built by native people performing forced labor under these systems.

Almost 250 years after Pope Paul's Papal Bull, America's murderous ruling class, hypocritically singing freedom songs while standing on the backs of their African slaves, legally reduced what was left of the original Native American Indians to the status of subject nation (a nation in name only) within a nation. This was accomplished by force of the same federal constitutional provision which classified black African slaves as three-fifths of a human being for the sole purpose of increasing the power and representation of slave states in the U.S. Congress.

American History: Genocide and The Black African Slave Holocaust

Estimates differ greatly as to how many black African people perished as a result of slavery and the slave trade. Slavery was practiced everywhere even before the rise of Islam and black slaves exported from Africa were widely traded throughout the Islamic world. Approximately 18,000,000 Africans were delivered into the Islamic trans-Saharan and Indian Ocean slave trades between 650 and 1905. Many died in slave raids, either as defenders seeking to avoid slave capture or as attackers seeking to obtain slaves. These battles pitted black African people against Arab, Asian, European and other black African slave raiders. The Sahara Desert (long death march), Indian Ocean and cross-Atlantic Ocean (dreaded middle passage) routes claimed the lives, but not the souls, of millions of black African people. According to Chancellor Williams in *The Destruction of Black Civilization,*

Murderous treks to coastal slave pens claimed captured slaves' lives as well as those of their captors. There was dying on both sides thanks to freedom fighters such as Queen Nzinga of Matamba (1580 - 1663). She was a famed and fearless guerrilla general, a master of ambush and infiltration. Her freedom fighters would often pose as bearers pretending to help Portuguese slavers transport their cargo. She personally led her guerrillas in a 40-year war against Portuguese slavers in the Angola-Congo region which caused the Portuguese to refer to this area as the region of "The Black Terror."

Courtesy of the New York Public Library

Harriet Tubman

Many captured black African slaves, rather than submit themselves or infants to a life under the peculiar institution of chattel slavery, took their own lives (suicide) and the lives of their infants (mercy killing or euthanasia). Many others perished during the brutal and merciless slave-breaking process, while still more perished in bloody and brutal slave uprisings and rebellions such as the one led by Gabriel [Proser] (executed a week before Nat Turner was born) who used his blacksmith skills, not to beat swords into plowshares, but to transform shovels into swords and knives.

Continued on page 14

International Update

Assata's Letter to the Pope

Editor's Note: On September 14, 1998, members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC) voted in support of H.R. 254, a bill that calls for the forcible return of Assata Shakur to the United States, from which she had fled political persecution 20 years ago.

H.R. 254 would, in effect, place a bounty on the head of Assata Shakur in the form of the $50,000 reward promised by the State of New Jersey for anyone who brings Shakur back into US custody from Cuba, where she now lives as a political refugee. This demonstrates how agents of the ruling class make or break laws at will, in order to stop and punish those actively working to transform the capitalist system. Let us not forget the legal murders of Fred Hampton and Mark Clarke in Chicago, or the deaths of 11 members of MOVE in Philadelphia, as just two examples of crimes against the people that have been perpetrated under the protection of law.

The support of this bill by the Congressional Black Caucus is an insult to low-income people of color and the poor, in specific, and working class people in the United States, in general, who are struggling for empowerment, self-determination and a better life.

Thirty years ago, Assata participated in organizing survival programs for the Black Panther Party, including the free breakfast and health care programs for children and the fight against police brutality. Later on, her membership in the Black Liberation Army drew the attention of the United States government's Counter-Intelligence program (COINTELPRO), headed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Like numerous members of the Black Panther Party and other organizations, Assata was singled out for harassment and surveillance, and she was set up, falsely accused of crimes and, subsequently, convicted.

Assata was sentenced to life imprisonment for the murder of a New Jersey state trooper and the wounding of his partner, an incident in which her comrade and friend, Zayde Malik Shakur, was also killed. She has always maintained her innocence. (See The Commemorator, *December 1998, for more details). Recognizing the political climate to which she was subjected, Assata and her supporters believed that she would be killed. Assata escaped and went underground and, in 1979, she reached Cuba, where she has lived ever since.*

The United States government's continued pursuit of Assata Shakur to carry out her sentence of life imprisonment is a reminder that they will pursue any course of action to prosecute and convict those who actively take a stand on behalf of the poor, minorities and working people.

Some members of the Congressional Black Caucus are former community organizers in the Black Liberation Movement. This vote clearly shows how government-connected caucuses, programs and committees co-opt those who, in the past, had organized independently of government arenas but now are dependent on the largesse of the bosses that put them in office. It should be noted that during Bill Clinton's impeachment troubles, members of the Congressional Black Caucus came out in support of him, seeming to ignore the fact that this President has committed real criminal acts against their constituents. It was Clinton who signed federal welfare reform into law, as well as the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). He has denied habeas corpus and supported HMO, and other insurance company takeovers, of the nation's medical system, crimes that have caused pain, suffering and death to minority and poor workers both within, and to the north and south of, United States borders.

Members of the CBC who abstained from supporting H.R. 254 forfeited their opportunity to take a stand through voting against the bill. There is little doubt these members are aware of the conditions that people of color and low-income workers still face in relation to the lack of living wages, health care, education, housing and the ongoing, systematic practice of police brutality. These are all issues whose rectification was called for in the Black Panther Party's Ten Point program. So-called Black leaders who purport to represent the interests of those who are used and then discarded by the powers that be but in actuality are beholden to those powers, cannot and will not advance the struggle for genuine economic and social justice.

Assata tells her story to the Roman Catholic Pope, in response to the highly publicized letter to the Pope from the New Jersey State Troopers, in which they asked him to intercede and to aid and abet their efforts to extradite Shakur from Cuba to the United States. Shakur summarizes her analysis of United States imperialism abroad and of the Black Liberation Movement in the United States in the 1960's and early 1970's and recounts her role in that struggle against conditions of institutionalized racism and poverty in the United States. Her letter, additionally, explains to the Pope how those conditions continue to exist and oppress poor and minority Americans today, and asks him to come to the defense of the people.

Commemorator photo

Assata Shakur, who has been in exile since 1978, has withstood many attacks by the U.S. government and its criminal justice system, continues to fight today.

Your Holiness,

I hope this letter finds you in good health, in good disposition, and enveloped in the spirit of goodness. I must confess that it had never occurred to me before to write to you, and I find myself overwhelmed and moved to have this opportunity.

Although circumstances have compelled me to reach out to you, I am glad to have this occasion to try and cross the boundaries that would otherwise tend to separate us.

I understand that the New Jersey State Police have written to you and asked you to intervene and to help facilitate my extradition back to the United States. I believe that their request is unprecedented in history. Since they have refused to make their letter to you public, although they have not hesitated to publicize their request, I am completely uninformed as to the accusations they are making against me. Why, I wonder, do I warrant such attention? What do I represent that is such a threat?

Please let me take a moment to tell you about myself. My name is Assata Shakur and I was born and raised in the United States. I am a descendant of Africans who were kidnapped and brought to the Americas as slaves. I spent my early childhood in the racist, segregated South. I later moved to the northern part of the country, where I realized that Black people were equally victimized by racism and oppression.

I grew up and became a political activist, participating in student struggles, the anti-war movement, and, most of all, in the movement for the liberation of African Americans in the United States. I later joined the Black Panther Party, an organization that was targeted by COINTELPRO, a program that was set up by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to eliminate all political opposition to the U.S. government's policies, to destroy the Black Liberation Movement in the U.S., and to discredit activists and to eliminate potential leaders.

As a result of being targeted by COINTELPRO, I, like many other young people, was faced with the threat of prison, going underground, into exile, or death.

At this point, I think that it is important to make one thing very clear. I have advocated and still advocate revolutionary changes in the structure and in the principles that govern the U.S. I advocate an end to capitalist exploitation, the abolition of racist policies, the eradication of sexism, and the elimination of political repression. If that is a crime, then I am totally guilty.

To make a long story short, ...let me emphasize that justice for me is not the issue, it is justice for my people that is at stake. When my people receive justice, I am sure that I will receive it, too. I know that your Holiness will reach your own conclusions, but I feel compelled to present the circumstances surrounding the application of "justice" in New Jersey. I am not the first nor the last to be victimized by the New Jersey system of "justice." The New Jersey

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State Police are infamous for their racism and brutality. Many legal actions have been filed against them and just recently, in a class action legal proceeding, the New Jersey State Police were found guilty of having an "officially sanctioned, de facto policy of targeting minorities for investigation and arrest."

Although New Jersey's population is more than 78 percent white, more than 75 percent of the prison population is made up of Blacks and Latinos. Eighty percent of women in New Jersey prisons are women of color. There are 15 people on death row in the state and seven of them are Black. A 1987 study found that New Jersey prosecutors sought the death penalty in 50 percent of cases involving a Black defendant and a white victim, but in only 28 percent of cases involving a Black defendant and a black victim.

The vast majority of those behind bars are people of color and virtually all of those behind bars are poor.

Unfortunately, the situation in New Jersey is not unique, but reflects the racism that permeates the entire country. The United States has the highest rate of incarceration in the world. There are more than 1.7 million people in U.S. prisons. This number does not include the more than 500,000 people in city and county jails, nor does it include the alarming number of children in juvenile institutions.

The vast majority of those behind bars are people of color and virtually all of those behind bars are poor.

The result of this reality is devastating. One third of Black men between the ages of 20 and 29 are either in prison or under the jurisdiction of the criminal justice system.

Prisons are big business in the United States, and the building, running, and supplying of prisons has become the fastest growing industry in the country. Factories are being moved into the prisons and prisoners are being forced to work for slave wages. This super-exploitation of human beings has meant the institutionalization of a new form of slavery. Those who cannot find work are forced to work in prison.

Not only are prisons being used as instruments of economic exploitation, they also serve as instruments of political repression. There are more than 100 political prisoners in the U.S. They are African Americans, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, Native Americans, Asians, and progressive white people who oppose the policies of the United States government. Many of those targeted by the COINTELPRO program have been in prison since the early 1970's.

Although the situation in the prisons is an indication of human rights violations inside the United States, there are other, more deadly indicators.

There are currently 3,365 people now on death row, and more than 50 percent of those awaiting death are people of color. Black people make up only 13 percent of the population, but we make up 41.01 percent of persons who have received the death penalty.

The number of state assassinations has increased drastically. In 1997 alone, 71 people were executed.

A special reporter assigned to the United Nations Organization found serious human rights violations in the U.S., especially those related to the death penalty. According to these findings, people who were mentally ill were sentenced to death, and people with severe mental and learning disabilities, as well as minors under age 18. Serious racial bias was found on the part of judges and prosecutors.

Specifically mentioned in the report was the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the only political prisoner on death row, who was sentenced to death because of his political beliefs and because of his work as a journalist, exposing police brutality in the city of Philadelphia.

Police brutality is a daily occurrence in our communities. The police have a virtual license to kill and they do kill: children, grandmothers, anyone they perceive to be the enemy. They shoot first and ask questions later. Inside the jails and prisons there is at least as much brutality as there was on slave plantations. An ever increasing number of prisoners are found hanging in their cells.

The United States is becoming a land more hostile to Black people and other people of color. Racism is running rampant and xenophobia is on the rise. This has been especially true in the sphere of domestic policy.

Politicians are attempting to blame social problems on Black people and other people of color. There have been attacks on essentially all affirmative action programs designed to help correct the accumulated results of hundreds of years of slavery and discrimination. In addition, the government seems determined to eliminate all social programs that provide assistance to the poor, resulting in a situation where millions of people do not have access to basic health care, decent housing , or quality education.

It was with great happiness that I read the Christmas message that Your Holiness delivered. I applaud you for taking up the cause of the poor, the homeless, the unemployed. The fact that you are addressing the issues of today — unemployment, hopelessness, child abuse, and the drug problem — is important to people all over the world.

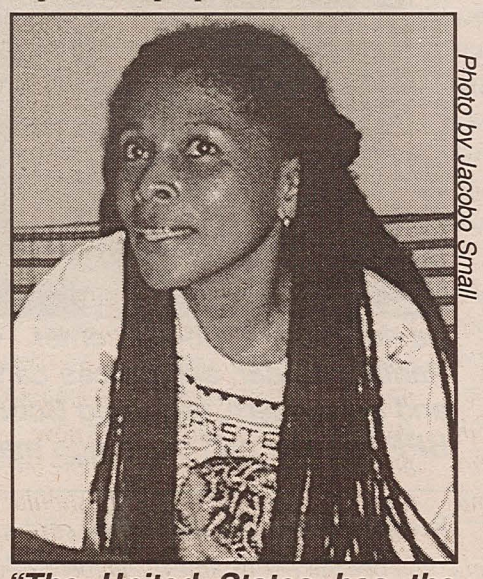

Photo by Jacobo Small

"The United States has the highest rate of incarceration in the world."– Assata Shakur

One third of Black people in the United States live in poverty, and our communities are inundated with drugs. We have every reason to believe that the CIA and other government agencies are involved in drug trafficking.

All my life I have been a spiritual person. I first learned of the struggle and the sacrifice of Jesus in the segregated churches of the South. I converted to Catholicism as a young girl. In my adult life I have become a student of religion and have studied Christianity, Islam, Asian religions, and the African religions of my ancestors. I have come to believe that God is universal in nature although called different names and with different faces. I believe that some people spell God with one "o" while others spell it with two.

What we call God is unimportant, as long as we do God's work. There are those who want to see God's wrath fall on the oppressed and not on the oppressors. I believe that the time has ended when slavery, colonialism, and oppression can be carried out in the name of religion. It was in the dungeons of prison that I felt the presence of God up close, and it has been my belief in God, and in the goodness of human beings that has helped me to survive. I am not ashamed of having been in prison, and I am certainly not ashamed of having been a political prisoner. I believe that Jesus was a political prisoner who was executed because he fought against the evils of the Roman Empire, because he fought the greed of the money changers in the temple, because he fought against the sins and injustices of his time. As a true child of God, Jesus spoke up for the poor, the meek, the sick, and the oppressed. The early Christians were thrown into lion dens. I will try and follow the example of so many who stood up in the face of overwhelming oppression.

I am not writing to ask you to intercede on my behalf. I ask nothing for myself. I only ask you to examine the social reality of the United States and to speak out against the human rights violations that are taking place.

Unfortunately, the situation in New Jersey is not unique, but reflects the racism that permeates the entire country. The United States has the highest rate of incarceration in the world.

On this day, the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., I am reminded of all those who gave their lives for freedom. Most of the people who live on this planet are still not free. I ask only that you continue to work and pray to end oppression and political repression. It is my heartfelt belief that all the people on this earth deserve justice: social justice, political justice, and economic justice. I believe it is the only way that we will ever achieve peace and prosperity on this earth. I hope that you enjoy your visit to Cuba. This is not a country that is rich in material wealth, but it is a country that is rich in human wealth, spiritual wealth, and moral wealth.

Respectfully yours,
Assata Shakur
Havana, Cuba

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Hilliard Bids for Office

Continued from page 1

Don Mulford's "Panther Bill" — a bill designed to suppress the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms. Entering the Capitol building bearing legal arms, they presented the Party position on the bill and were all arrested, placing the organization in the national media spotlight.

In October, 1967, Huey had a run-in with two Oakland policemen where an attempt was made on Huey's life, leaving him with gunshot wounds to the abdomen. Huey was arrested, however, and charged with the murder of police officer John Frey, and the wounding of police officer Herbert Heanes. The "Free Huey" Movement grew out of this incident. It was in this context that I first met David Hilliard. I resigned from my job as a retail delivery man at Oakland Foremost Dairies and began to take close notice and follow the Black Panther Party and its movement.

Throughout this period, David Hilliard worked hard to hold the organization together through administrating the day-to-day work of the Party as Chief of Staff, while Black Panther Party co-founder Bobby Seale concentrated his attention on fundraising for Huey's defense, primarily through speaking engagements. Later, David Hilliard assumed primary responsibility for the administration of the Party when Bobby Seale was kidnapped from the streets of Berkeley for his speech at the Chicago Democratic Convention in 1968, and taken to Illinois for trial. After Huey P. Newton was acquitted of murder, he relieved David of his duties as Chief of Staff, and reassumed his leadership position.

David has written a book about the period of his life that ended with Huey Newton's death in 1989, entitled The Other Side of Glory. *As* The Commemorator *prepares to honor the 10th Anniversary of the tragic murder of Dr. Newton, we are pleased to present an interview with David Hilliard that took place in January of this year, shortly after Mr. Hilliard declared his candidacy for the West Oakland (Third District) seat of the Oakland City Council. Mr. Hilliard is a member of Oakland's Human Relations Commission and Executive Director of the Huey P. Newton Foundation. Bobby Seale is David Hilliard's campaign manager.*

Dickson: I would like to thank you for giving us the time because I know you're busy. Let's start first with your candidacy in the Oakland City Council, the goals and tactics. You declared your candidacy just recently?

Hilliard: Yes, I think we did it on January 6th. But it's been a couple of weeks.

Dickson: Tell me, what made you decide to run? And describe precisely the area, the district. That's District Number Three, I believe?

Hilliard: Right.

Dickson: Talk about it.

Hilliard: Actually the decision to run was a long process.

For about a year, people have been coming to me, or our secretary of the Huey P. Newton Foundation, Alze Roberts. Elaine Brown suggested it long before Jerry Brown made his bid. About two years ago, Elaine Brown, Jerry Brown, Fredricka Newton and I met down at Jack London Square and we started talking about a revisiting of our [BPP] agenda. Really, we started somewhere in 1968 when we ran Eldridge Cleaver for President on The Peace and Freedom Party ticket; we ran Bobby Seale for the Congressional seat; we ran Huey Newton for Senate; and we ran Kathleen Cleaver for Assembly in San Francisco. This was 1968. Then, of course, in the 70's we ran Bobby Seale for Mayor in Oakland against John Reading. Bobby got about 46% of the vote. We ran Elaine Brown for Oakland City Council. So we have a history of working and trying to be inclusive in this whole political process. It's not something that just happened with me. But this particular bid really came to fruition when I made the decision after talking to community residents.

Commemorator Photo

David Hilliard (lower-center, wearing glasses), former Black Panther leader, announces candidacy surrounded by the press, and supporters, including Bobby Seale (on right, wearing beret), BPP founder and campaign manager for Brother Hilliard.

About twenty people had come to me at various times and asked me if I would consider running. And it also had its impetus in me supporting Jerry Brown for his candidacy for mayor of Oakland. Jerry Brown took my bus tour back in October of 1998 and people saw me aligned with Jerry Brown. This is a relationship that goes back to the 70's. Jerry Brown worked with Elaine Brown, who was a Democratic delegate to the Democratic Convention, when he made his bid for presidency. Elaine Brown had a relationship with Jerry Brown. Elaine Brown and the Black Panther Party played a pivotal role in the building of the Grove-Shafter Freeway, out of which came some 10,000 jobs for residents of Oakland through the City Center. So we have a history of political involvement in this city, and given the fact that there's an absence of any real voice for the underclass, that is, the lumpenproletariat (those unemployed, the unemployables, and homeless people) I thought that this would be a propitious moment to fill that vacuum because that particular constituency is not involved in politics.

It seems that the various political representatives and the programs do not trickle down to that constituency. And even Jerry Brown had said in his campaign that those people who are left out should be brought into the process and I'm running to make certain that happens. I want to be with him and to make sure that he does not forget that his campaign promises were "the last being first and the first being last." I think that, more than anything, is why I'm making this bid to run now. I'm running now so the underclass, the lumpenproletariat, the unemployables, the homeless people can have greater representation.

Dickson: We see the problem. So what do you see as the most important issues facing Oakland in this regard?

Hilliard: The issue of economic development, especially in the flatlands in East Oakland and West Oakland. There's no real economic power representatives for African-Americans going into the year 2000. During our heyday in the 60's, at least we saw Black businesses: they were the liquor store owners. They were the homeowners. There were business owners. You don't see that in the 90's and going into this next millennium. There's a surging economic development in East Oakland up and down International Boulevard, but there is nothing like that for African-Americans. So, of course, that's very disheartening. In a way it's really insulting and unsettling that so much has been done and we've benefited so little. We championed the civil rights struggle, Martin Luther King and his quest for economic development. The Students Nonviolent Coordinating Committee was talking about empowerment and the right to vote, about Black Power and the cry for economic power for Blacks. But we still have not manifested that. So, I think that one of the more important elements of my campaign is to make certain that Black people are a part of this economic development process going into the year 2000.

Dickson: Nancy Nadel is the incumbent in District Three; what is the difference between your program and hers? Between her political philosophy and yours? What do you think of her program? She's someone who has been there for a while and she is labeled as a progressive. What distinguishes your program from hers? Can you comment on that?

Hilliard: Well, I think *that,* within itself, is the first variance. She's a progressive. I consider myself a revolutionary and quite an activist. If she's a progressive, then what does that make me? I would have to say that I'm even more progressive than Nancy because Nancy Nadel's politics are really a continuation of the groundwork that we laid down in the 60's. It's not that we are worlds apart. We are in ideological unity on many things. I certainly agree with her politics in terms of the environment. Nancy Nadel is a very wonderful person. I consider Nancy Nadel a friend. I was a friend of her husband, Chappell Hayes. So I know Nancy Nadel's connection to the community.

But politics is not about personality. It puts principle before personality. I have an agenda that's broader than Nancy's. My agenda can pull together the very desperate forces in the community. There are all these people claiming leadership in West Oakland, people who are not from here. They just show up and they set up these organizations. Well, I'm from West Oakland. I've been here since 1953. This is my home, the street that I live on. I have roots in this community.

As I mentioned earlier, we had an agenda for housing in our Ten Point Program. We called for the residency requirement of police in our community and demanded integration of the police department. Point #7 was about the end to police abuse. So for our Black police chief, his position has its basis in our politics because we fought, you know, to make certain that there was representation for African-Americans within the police department. When we talked about housing, we were talking about decent housing fit for the shelter of human beings. Our Housing Program is something that goes back to the early 60's. When we talk about free health clinics, today's call by many people for universal health care is part of Point # 6.

Continued on next page

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So a lot of things that Nancy Nadel and a lot of these other politicians are now beginning to propose and implement was the foundation in the bedrock of the Black Panther Party's Program. Isn't it ironic that some of those things we went to prison for, and some of us died for, are now public policy? I don't see any antagonistic contradictions between me and Nancy Nadel. It's just that I think that I have a broader vision and I could get work done where she couldn't, especially in the area of pulling together all of these multi-racial, ethnic groups that are now in the West Oakland community. Our coalition politics is what we championed and I think that I can do that much better than Nancy Nadel.

Dickson: What ticket are you running on? Is it Libertarian, Democrat, or what?

Hilliard: Well, I'm running on a non-partisan ticket, because there are many different opinions and political persuasions in the community. This is a non-partisan election and I represent all of the constituencies in the community.

Dickson: I note that Bobby Seale is your campaign manager. What are his ideas on you running?

Hilliard: Bobby Seale's ideas and mine are pretty much in harmony. We're in lock step on the agenda. The agenda is economic development. The agenda is improving the education system. McClymonds is my high school. It's my alma mater. I am an alumnus of that high school. We're talking about reclaiming that high school and bringing it back to academic excellence. After all, this is the school of the first Black judge, Lionel Wilson; and the first African-American mayor we helped get elected, after overturning a 100 year reign of Republicanism in this city. We want to make McClymond's truly a school of champions but also a school of champions academically. So we're talking about education. We're talking about housing. And we're talking about jobs. And we're talking about working with the police in the community. And we're talking about residency requirements as we did in the 60's for police in the city.

Dickson: You made reference to the Black Panther Party Ten Point Program. That's something that *The Commemorator* has been highlighting and writing about since we started. Can you comment further in terms of how the 10 Point Program relates to your campaign?

Hilliard: Well, I think that we'll take the best out of what the Black Panther Party stood for and try to make that applicable to these days and times.

Commemorator photo

Commemorator Editor and CCBPP Chair Melvin Dickson (left) and David Hilliard, former BPP Chief of Staff and Oakland City Council candidate, in January, 1999.

Certainly we're not economically empowered, as I said. Of course we call for full employment for our people. That's Point #2 of our program. Homelessness in this city has a disgraceful, disproportionate impact in terms of African-Americans. When you look in the streets that's essentially what you see – African-American men and women in the street with no place to live. Our Ten Point Program addressed the area of housing. The Black Panther Party addressed decent education that would expose this decadent American society in our Black Panther Program. The reversal on Affirmative Action is an indication of the need for our educational agenda, because there is a very, very negative decrease in African-American youth enrollment at UC-Berkeley and other universities in this state because of the hits on Affirmative Action. We need a more aggressive return to an educational agenda. Our schools here in Oakland are embarrassing. It's dismal the conditions that our schools are in. We have a strong agenda on education that was a part of our Black Panther Party's Program. Point #7 is where we talk about policing in the community and trying to improve our African-Americans relationship with the police in the community. So that program is very relevant. And I see it as an unfinished agenda.

Dickson: You have always operated within the context of an organized effort, politically and structurally within an organization. What is your organized plan and what is your effort and purpose beyond the campaign in terms of the Black Panther Party goals? You talked about a 10 point program. Do you see your election as a way to advance that process?

Hilliard: I think that's a very good question. I think it's a very salient question, absolutely. "Yes" is the answer to that question. This campaign is also a tool for organizing a broad based constituency, because remember the Black Panther Party was about the business of multi-cultural politics, it was all inclusive. Our leader, Huey Newton, called it intercommunalism and laid out its concepts. We live in a state of reactionary intercommunalism. That's because we are controlled by reactionary conditions, with unemployment, with racism. These are the conditions that have negative impact against us. We want revolutionary intercommunalism, for the people to have their basic desires and needs met. We are struggling for that. That's still a part of our process. Yes, we're about the business of trying to build organizations.

I would like to think that my campaign is a paradigm for youth. We want to reach out to the young Asians, we want to reach out to the young Latinos, we want to get involved with the gay community, we want to get involved with the Native American community, as we did thirty years ago. So this campaign is really an attempt to build that kind of multi-cultural machine, or that kind of multi-cultural organization that can become a very positive force to bring about political consequences if the people's desires and needs are not met by the political administrators. Make no bones about it, that's exactly what this is about. This is about building a movement. I would like to say that if the Black Panther Party was in existence today under the ideology that was inspired by Huey Newton and Bobby Seale, the Black Panther Party would have to represent Asians and whites and gays and women and seniors because that's what we were about. Given the dynamic of the world today, if we were going to be relevant we would have to have that kind of composition, and I'm building toward that as I move that campaign forward.

Dickson: The next thing I want to focus on is the Huey P. Newton Foundation and the Panther Archives. I know there's been some talk about the archives. Talk a little bit about the Foundation. I'd like to introduce you as Executive Director and have you tell our readers what that's about and the kind of work that the foundation involves itself with and then shed some light on the archives and the Stanford University deal.

Hilliard: The Foundation was founded in 1993 as a vehicle to advance the ideology of the Black Panther Party as espoused by its leader and theoretician Huey Newton; to keep that vision pure, because there has been so much revisionist politics about the Black Panther Party. There are people who write about the Black Panther Party who really were community workers, but who really did not know the ideological vision, so that the whole point of the Huey Newton Foundation is to maintain the purity of that vision.

Our leader, Huey Newton, called it intercommunalism and laid out its concepts. We live in a state of reactionary intercommunalism. That's because we are controlled by reactionary conditions, with unemployment, with racism

That's it, to maintain the ideological purity as laid down by the founder, Huey Newton. That's why it's called the Huey Newton Foundation and it is a knowledge-based entity. It's not an organizing machine. It's a research center. It's a Foundation which has probably the most voluminous collection of Huey's writings in existence, including probably the most voluminous collection of FBI documents from COINTELPRO that was owned by Huey Newton. This is Huey Newton's archives, some three or four hundred photographs, some eight or nine hundred audio tapes and video, 35mm, 16mm (they're an extensive archive.)

The Huey Newton Foundation is about maintaining that history, about preserving that history, about collecting it and having it available for the community, for students that are involved in doing research, for the continuation of those ideas and maintaining the validity of what we really stood for. There are many ways the Foundation does that to continue the legacy of the Black Panther Party programs. For instance, we have book giveaways. These are new books. We give away five or six hundred books — books by Malcolm X, by Martin Luther King and Arthur Ashe's wife, cookbooks, books on kids, wonderful

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Huey's Corner Stokely Carmichael

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in the South — registering people to vote and organizing co-operatives and the like. We felt they could do a good job of administering the Party because they were all committed people and highly skilled. Their leadership came from college campuses.

Our original plan was to draft Stokely Carmichael of SNCC into the Party and make him Prime Minister, then to add all the SNCC leadership to the Party's administrative positions, including H. Rap Brown and James Forman. By doing this, we hoped to create a merger, not a coalition, since it seemed to us that only merging could we produce the strong leadership we needed.

The movement was cresting around the country. Brothers on the block in many northern cities were moving angrily in response to the problems that overwhelmed them. New York and other eastern cities had exploded in 1964, Watts went up in 1965, Cleveland in 1966, and in 1967 another long hot summer was approaching. But the brothers needed direction for their energies. The Party wanted no more spontaneous riots, because the outcome was always the same: the people might liberate their territories for a few short days or hours, but eventually the military force of the oppressor would wipe out their gains. Having neither the strength nor the organization, the people were powerless. In the final analysis, riots caused only more repression and the loss of brave men. Blacks bled and died in the riots and went to jail on petty or false charges. If the brothers could be organized into disciplined cadres, working in broadly based community programs, then the energy expended in riots could be directed toward permanent and positive changes.

The matter was urgent. Police were strengthened nationwide and given more power. In order to deal with this, we had to organize our resources and develop and administrative body. On the other hand, although SNCC had skills, we felt they were headed for a decline, because the thrust of the movement was diminishing in the South and moving into the cities of the north and West. At this point in time, it seemed clear to us that SNCC and the Black Panther Party needed each other, and Black people needed us both.

By making Stokely Prime Minister — head of the Party — we were in effect voting to give leadership of the Party to SNCC. We even considered moving our headquarters to Atlanta, where we would be under SNCC, in their buildings, with access to their duplicating equipment and other sorely needed materials. Our long-range plan was to organize the communities of the North, especially the brothers on the block, using SNCC's administrative talent to co-ordinate the activities. Combining their work in the South and ours in the North would give the forces of Black liberation a powerful striking force.

We drew up our plans, drafting Stokely Carmichael as Prime Minister, H. Rap Brown as Minister of Justice, and James Forman as Minister of Foreign Affairs. Our own position was clear; we would accept whatever places in the administration they had for us; we were not hung up on status. Eldridge, Bobby, and I were in full agreement about this. A party as such did not interest me. I was more concerned about the revolution and the freedom of Black People, and getting the best personnel in positions of authority to bring these goals about. From the beginning, Black Panther leadership had been a casual thing, designed only to give our ideas a form and a structure…

*****

Our visit lasted just long enough for us to disagree. Stokely began by telling me what it would take to get me out of jail. The only thing that would do it, he said, was armed rebellion, culminating in a race war. I disagreed with him. While I acknowledged the pervasiveness of racism, the larger problem should be seen in terms of class exploitation and the capitalist system. In analyzing what was happening in the country, I said that we would have to accept many alliances and form solidarity with any people fighting the common oppressor. He objected to the Black Panther alliance with the Peace and Freedom Party and said we should not associate with white radicals or let them come to our meetings or be involved in our rallies. Stokely warned that whites would destroy the movement, alienate Black people, and lessen our effectiveness in the community. Later, he proved right in terms of what happened to the Party, although he was wrong in principle. As a result of coalitions, the Black Panthers were brought into the free speech movement, the psychedelic fad, and the advocacy of drugs, which we were and are dead set against. All these causes were irrelevant to our work, which was concerned with deeper and more fundamental issues, in fact, survival. When these things happened, Stokely warned, whites would try to take the leadership from us.

I did not believe him while he was running these things down to me. We were not into a racist bag, I told him, and these developments were not inevitable. At the time I felt sure that Stokely was afraid of himself and his own weaknesses. I responded to his racist analysis with a class analysis. We could have solidarity and friendship in a common struggle against a common oppressor without the whites taking over. But in the thirty-three months I spent in jail our leadership did falter, and serious frictions developed between the Black Panthers and white radicals. Not until I got out of jail nearly three years later were we able to start putting everything together again.

All Power to the People

Capitalism and Genocide

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The term "Islamic slave trade" implies characterization of the cross-Atlantic slave trade as the "Christian slave trade," while the term "peculiar institution of slavery" has been used to delineate the more diabolical and murderous aspects of the European-Christian slave trade. Both institutions, however, exhibited murderous, diabolical and fiendish characteristics.

Slavery was practiced every\where even before the rise of Islam and black slaves exported from Africa were widely traded throughout the Islamic world. Approximately 18,000,000 Africans were delivered into the Islamic trans-Saharan and Indian Ocean slave trades between 650 and 1905.

Some scholars claim that 11,640,000 black African slaves were exported from Africa to the western hemisphere roughly between 1441 and 1865, a period of 424 years, with 9,710,000 arriving, implying that approximately 1.9 million perished en route, a death rate of about 16.3%. On January 20, 1998, George Carey, speaking officially as the Archbishop of Canterbury, alleged that some 24 million black Africans were transported to the western hemisphere during the Atlantic slave trade, based on recently disclosed U.N. documents.

Brother Malcolm X, by comparison, states that 114 million black African slaves were transported to the western hemisphere via the Sahara Desert, Indian and Atlantic Ocean slave trade routes, with 100 million perishing en route, a death rate of 84.4%.

Over 115 million African blacks — close to the 1930's population of the United States — were murdered or enslaved during the slave trade.

One hundred million of us black people! Your grandparents! Mine! Murdered by this white man. To get fifteen million of us here to make us slaves, on the way he murdered one hundred million!

Official petitions filed by the Pan-African Republic (PAR) with the International Court of Justice (World Court) and the U.N. Human Rights Commission seeking cultural and capital reparations for slavery, state 65 million black Africans perished during transportation to the western hemisphere as slaves. Chancellor Williams also supports a much higher death rate:

For every two million Blacks enslaved over a million died. The record indicates rather clearly that many millions preferred death to slavery.

Moreover, the death rates among the European Captains and crews engaged in the slave trade were at least as high as those among their cargo on the middle passage. Of slave ships crews that embarked from Liverpool in 1787 less than half returned alive.

Application of this 50% death rate to estimates of 11.6 million to 24 million slaves exported during the 424-year period of 1441-1865, and 18 million to 115 million during the 1,355-year period of 650-1905, yields the following death totals: 5.9 million to 12 million from 1441 to 1865 and 9 million to 57.5 million from 650 to 1905.

It is very possible that from 65 million to in excess of 100 million black African slaves perished as result of the African slave Diaspora and holocaust over a millennium, compared to the 60 million Native American Indians who perished in the 400 years between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries.

American and global monopoly capitalism's origins lie in the odyssey of torture, vexation, death, anguish and exploitation en masse of Native and African American people.

Genocide, Capitalism and Labor

In order to understand the nature of a thing it is necessary to understand the history of its material development: how it first arose in history and transformed itself through the principal stages of its growth. The structure of American-led, global monopoly capitalism rests on the blood, sweat and shifting skeletons of at least tens of millions and probably well over 100 million Native American Indian and black African slaves.

Insofar as this fact and the state-enforced policies of mass murder, robbery, rape, kidnapping and exploitation constitute genocide, it follows that American-led, global monopoly capitalism has its historical genesis in genocide. And because labor, whether performed by involuntary servants, chattel, debt or wage slaves, is still labor, the historical genesis of capitalism lies in the commission of genocide against labor.

Hence, what befell Native American Indians and black African slaves is part of the history of the material development of capitalism: how it first arose in history and transformed itself through committing genocide against labor. It is also part of the history of labor's material development

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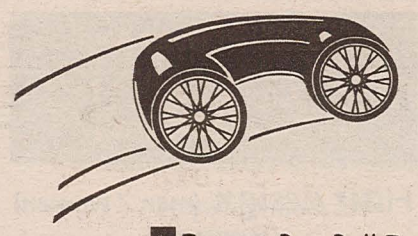
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Capitalism and Genocide

and how labor continues to be transformed by capitalism's historical tendency to inflict conditions upon labor which constitute genocide.

The edifice of American-led, global monopoly capitalism also rests, historically, upon the enslavement, murder, rape and exploitation *en masse* of the working classes of and working-class immigrants from Europe, Asia, Latin America, the Caribbean and every corner of the earth. The word "slave" is derived from the enslavement of the people (Slavs) of Central Europe by the forefathers of European capitalism. Slave is a corruption of the word slav, sclavus in Medieval Latin, esclave in Old French, sclav in Middle English, and was eventually applied to anyone subjected to bond servitude.

Working class immigrants from Europe, fleeing the ruling class-enforced, parallel economic, social and political tyranny which gave rise to the emerging forces of European capitalism, found themselves caught, just a micro-step above slavery, in the jaws and belly of the beast of American capitalism.

The minimal markers of humanity which labor has organized and pleaded for, in response to the genocidal conditions imposed by capitalism, include: a living wage, worker's compensation, the eight-hour day, safe working conditions and abolition of child wage-slavery. The machine gun, hangman's noose, electric chair, blackjack, prison cell, and legal frame-up, aided by bribed judges, stacked courts, the political police, crooked politicians, and a predatory, lying press (always at the beck and call of the man) have always been capitalism's historical reaction.

At every turn the world's streets have been flooded "as high as the horse's bridle" with labor's blood, shed by capitalism. Although history's annals are overflowing with atrocities inflicted by capitalism on labor, time and space here permit only a few examples of how American labor has been viciously attacked by forces of capital in the twentieth century.

One such atrocity against American labor was committed by Edsel Ford (son of Henry, one of the icons of American capitalism). On March 7, 1932, in Dearborn, Michigan, hunger marchers, many unemployed Ford plant workers, had come to present Edsel Ford with a plan to put them back to work. As the army of hungry, unemployed workers approached the city line of Dearborn (a town owned by Ford), one of the march leaders said, "Remember, we don't want any violence! A committee will present our demands. No trouble. No fighting. Stay in line." Edsel Ford and Harry Bennett (head of Ford's private police army), orchestrated the following massacre, using the Dearborn police and hundreds of Ford's gangsters, as described by writer Philip Bonosky:

Then came the bullets. They whistled past Bill's ears, and he remembered his days in the trenches of France, and shuddered ... men and women fell before him as though suddenly broken. Young James Ashford, with his FREE THE SCOTTSBORO BOYS tumbling, pitched to the ground with a bullet in his leg. In front, Joe York fell. Some ran screaming with blood flowing from wounds in chest and shoulders; others writhed on the ground, staring at the bones of their shattered legs.

The marchers fell back; but again, the incredible courage of them surged up. They picked up their wounded — there were almost 60 — these men and women who had never been wounded before; but they did not run in panic. Blood soaked the road ... A machine gun, inside the gates, sent out a roar of death ... More marchers fell. Their shocked faces were thrown to the sky and they collapsed on the ground, holding their empty, defenseless hands to their bleeding stomachs. Three more lay dead; Joe Bussell, Coleman Lenny, and Jose DiBlasio. Twenty-three others lay seriously wounded.

"That was the Ford Massacre. But it was too late to stop the American people with bullets."

On July 28, 1932, in the nation's capital, General Douglas MacArthur, then-Colonel Dwight D. Eisenhower and Major George O. Patton, representing American capitalism, unleashed armor, machine guns, infantry and cavalry against impoverished, unemployed World War I veterans and their families, simply because, suffering under the Great Depression, they demanded the government honor its promise to pay the bonus earned by the vets in the trenches.

Too few know that "May Day," for which the former Soviet bloc would roll out the tanks, was to commemorate the May 1, 1886 Haymarket Affair in Chicago. Albert R. Parsons (member of the Knights of Labor and founder of the Central Labor Union), along with August Spies, George Engel and Adolph Fischer, were convicted and placed on the gallows after a massive frame-up and show trial simply because they sought an eight-hour day for the workers. From the gallows Parsons said:

"Will I be allowed to speak, O men of America? Let me speak, Sheriff Matson! Let the voice of the people be heard!" He tried to go on but the trap was sprung.

After 179 men died gasping for air in Luzerne County, Pennsylvania's Avondale coal mine in 1869, leaving behind 600 widows and orphans, simply because American capitalism had refused to spend the relatively few dollars needed for an alternative mine entrance, John Siney (head of the newly formed Workingmen's Benevolent Association) addressed the gathered workers and their families.

"Men, if you must die with your boots on, die for your families, your homes, your country, but do not longer consent to die like rats in a trap for those who have no more interest in you than in the pick you dig with."

It is beyond legitimate dispute that American-led, global monopoly capitalism, finds its genesis and regeneration in the commission of genocide against labor from every corner of the earth.

ALL POWER TO THE PEOPLE!

CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE

Behind Lewinsky

Continued from page 2

claiming to be stopping terrorism, the United States government has initiated and led wars of aggression, insuring mega-profits for the ruling class. The US government is sending computerized fighter planes and two billion-dollar bombers to Africa, Iraq and Yugoslavia; firing tons of missiles and bombs which are killing and maiming thousands of children, women and men, destroying lives and livelihoods, towns and cities, causing mass starvation, disease and devastation as those nations' infrastructures are pulverized under daily attacks.

In the meantime, with untold numbers dying in the Balkans, Wall Street's Dow Jones Industrial Average is the highest it has ever been in its history and continues to rise.

The Bill and Monica Saga — A Perspective

On the surface, what appeared in the press was an attack upon an individual for a series of alleged indiscretions. The first indiscretion related to sexual behavior and that was total nonsense. Obviously, humans are sexual beings. This was nothing new or different. Obviously politicians are human beings, too, and, are, therefore, sexual. Additionally, it appears there is not one of them — from Livingston to Hyde to Bill Clinton — who hasn't demonstrated a marital infidelity. They all do it. The American people recognize this. But the press polls do not represent the American public. The Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party and the readers of *The Commemorator* do not care who the President sleeps with — our constituents are too busy looking for work and staving off eviction, or working so many jobs they are preoccupied with those few cherished moments they do have to see their children or spouses, to be thinking about this.

The second indiscretion was that Clinton lied about it. Putting all the legal technicalities aside, the majority in the polls (not to mention those not covered in the polls) lined up to say "We don't care!" "Why do they care????"

l) A clear majority of the population know politicians lie all the time and have come to expect it. According to a survey published in The New York Times of March 6, 1998, done by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press, only 20% of Americans are satisfied with the state of the nation and only 34% basically trust the government. The director of the center, Kohut, said that trust in the government remained relatively low because of the perceived failure to solve problems like crime, drug use and lack of Medicare funding, and because politicians were seen as being corrupt.

2) The issues upon which "opinion" polls are based don't matter to the general public. The questions they ask are not about bread and butter issues such as food and housing prices, adequate paying jobs, affordable health care. The polls are not dealing with the fact that, according to The New York Times November 27, 1998 article "Employees Facing Steep Increases in Health Costs," many working Americans are paying 8% to 20% more for health insurance premiums this year, the sharpest price increases since the early 1990's. Opinion polls don't talk about the 43.4 million people who have no health insurance.

3) A large number of people do not believe in "Kiss and Tell." They figure it is none of anyone else's business. They would do the same things as President Clinton. They see what Bill did as the honorable thing to do.

4) Some are not convinced that, given the very excellent lawyer that Clinton is, that he actually broke the law. Perjury was not proved, only alleged. There are huge numbers of people who did not want their President taken out of office. They were not impressed with Kenneth Starr, or his tobacco lobby money. They have no respect for Linda Tripp and just don't take Monica very seriously. It was not, to them, a weighty issue.

5) Americans are, however, very concerned with the state of the economy. They are very concerned with how very hard they have to work, with the fact that the good jobs are disappearing at a faster rate than ever before. They are concerned about the reinstitution of slave labor and the reorganization of medical care to the point where only the wealthy can afford comprehensive care while insurance companies and other private corporations make billions in profits.

One out of seven Americans voted for Clinton. He got a majority of those who did vote. He still commands the majority that voted. But, this is not about the scapegoating of an individual. The population knows that the impeachment of Bill Clinton would not have, and could not have, solved the problems facing the overwhelming majority of Americans. There are, however, many people who want to know why President Clinton isn't being indicted for what he has done to America while in office. It is not as though he hasn't done things that warrant his removal. It's not that he has not committed crimes. He promised universal, comprehensive health care to all Americans. He lied about it. Not only didn't he deliver on his promise but, instead, he granted Medicaid waivers to states to allow rationing of health care through HMOs. He did not get up on a platform and say, "I will put health insurance and health care provision under managed care so a few can make billions as a result of

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West Oakland Fights for Future

Continued from page 1

Development and Law Center have received $30,000 each and are targeted for $750,000 over the next six years, as payment for their co-operation, if the plan receives approval from the city of Oakland.

Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party volunteers who had spoken at the series of public forums between November, 1998 and February, 1999, demanded that the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Oakland redevelopment plan be amended, per the BPP 10-Point Program's call for the creation of jobs at living wages and a guarantee that no poor, minority or other low-income residents lose their homes.

We need money in the pockets of the People

"In order to truly advance economic and social conditions for the poor and working people in Oakland, living wage jobs are mandatory so that we can renovate, rebuild and develop our own community. But in Oakland as across the country we have seen all previous redevelopment programs come in from the outside to uproot and discard the vast majority of the poor and minorities in order to construct new homes and businesses for those who can line the pockets of real estate speculators, politicians and development corporations," Melvin Dickson, *The Commemorator* Editor told SF Foundation representatives on December 12, 1998.

"So-called government poverty programs have never worked to diminish poverty; they have only meant wholesale evictions and homelessness through enforcement of anti-blight laws and eminent domain, police sweeps of young people, and arrests of small shopkeepers whose businesses stand in the way. We need the wages that can give us the power to determine the destiny of our own community and we are firmly and unalterably opposed to any plan that does not guarantee affordable and decent housing to all residents of West Oakland, not just a token percentage thrown in to shut-up the opposition."

Selling out the poor and minorities

Mayor Jerry Brown justifies the 7th Street/McClymonds Development Initiative, which encompasses the area from the Oakland Army Base to Market Street and from Clawson to South Prescott areas, as part of a four-part plan for Oakland laid out in his 1998 inaugural address, claiming it will reduce the city's crime rate and encourage a "vibrant" private market for downtown housing.

"We will not let Oakland sell out black, other minority and low-income working families," Dickson explained. "Our people were terrorized by the US military's recent urban warfare 'exercises' on the streets of Oakland that were not only permitted, but welcomed, by Mayor Brown and other city officials. The city is making deals with outside private corporations and private developers by offering tax breaks, cheap labor and other enterprise zone incentives and promises of new housing to encourage resettlement from the suburbs and San Francisco to Oakland."

Referring to the many rundown neighborhoods in West Oakland, CCBPP Chair Melvin Dickson commented, "They consciously allow this to occur over time; then the poor are targeted (with blighting laws) because the area has strategic economic importance due to its location. Enforcement of so-called 'blighting laws' allow corporations and government entities to displace poor residents through redevelopment plans that do not address the ways and means of guaranteeing a living wage to all current residents."

According to a recently published study entitled, *Redevelopment: The Unknown Government* by Jerry Andrew, the fight against "blight" and for "redevelopment" is on the rise in California: "Indeed, it has become a rapidly growing drain on California's public resources, amassing enormous power with little public awareness or oversight. There is no evidence that redevelopment is a positive factor in the elimination of blight. Unlike other government entities, it may use power of eminent domain to benefit private interests. Thus, an agency and city may appear to be one entity. Often city councils appoint themselves as agency members, with council meetings doubling as redevelopment meetings. Legally, however, a redevelopment agency is an entirely separate government authority, with its own revenue, budget, staff and expanded powers to issue debt and condemn private property."

The San Francisco Foundation purports to be "guiding community involvement to set up a decision-making and self-governing" body to oversee the redevelopment program. However, the Foundation did not give advance notice of their meetings to CCBPP or others known to be in opposition to the plan, and then shut down agendizement of living wages and guaranteed upgraded housing for all those who presently live in West Oakland. The Foundation continues to pursue its plans to replace current residents with people in higher income brackets. The "body" it creates will be formed by a process that has frozen out the targeted community, especially those of low and moderate income, both in terms of decision-making and representation.

Attack poverty, not the poor

Oakland's anti-blight ordinance, passed in March 1998, charges fines of $727 for noncompliance with city regulations by homes and businesses considered "eyesores." These "eyesores," more often than not related to the economic survival of the impoverished people in the community, include aluminum can collections and metals for recycling, curbside auto repair, selling fish to the neighbors and so on. According to Raymond Joe, Commemoration Committee volunteer, "The city has put in anti-blighting ordinances which penalize and harass low-income residents who do not stand to benefit from redevelopment schemes and who cannot meet the city's blighting codes. Now, private foundations, such as the San Francisco Foundation, with funding from the multinational Hewlett Packard corporation, use money to co-opt local organizations and leadership, muting demands for fundamental change."

OCCUR was represented at the meetings. David Glover, OCCUR's spokesperson, quoted in the Oakland Tribune, said he was glad to see that people were not competing for the San Francisco Foundation funding.

The San Francisco Foundation is one of the largest in the United States with assets of more than $500 million. They sponsor non-profit organizations throughout the Bay Area. The Packard Foundation has pledged millions of additional dollars for West Oakland redevelopment if the Oakland Economic Redevelopment Corporation, under Mayor Brown's leadership, allows this to go through.

Oakland Mayor Jerry Brown addressed the kick-off redevelopment meeting last November and stated outright support for the 7th Street/McClymonds Corridor Initiative. He announced his tie to this scheme, saying he has staked his whole future on it going forward as a model for the entire country. He predicted that his redevelopment plan will bring 75,000 new jobs from businesses attracted to the area. Yet San Francisco Foundation representative Fred Blackwell was unwilling to include a demand for jobs at living wages for the people who presently live in West Oakland in the official record of the community meetings.

Advocates of poor and minority West Oakland residents noted the past practice and history of "redevelopment" schemes in which funding for community-based projects, such as the Model Cities program of the 1960's, had gone to inside groups and poverty pimps and never reached the people it was supposed to aid.

Abolish neocolonialism

"The CCBPP stands by the original Black Panther Party program of self-determination for the low-income community, which does not mean outside poverty-pimp moneyed minorities and left-cover liberals using force and coercion to institute laws, policies and programs that attack and drive out the poor for their private financial advantage. If we were to support that idea, we would be supporting 500 years of colonialism on the continents of Africa, Asia and Latin America. In Africa, the means of domination was military force and placing local chieftains in the employ of the colonialists. In West Oakland, the weaponry is more sophisticated, but the purpose is exactly the same.

"The powerless, the unemployed and underemployed, the small homeowners and business people are being targeted to be pushed out. When people are not paid enough to feed and clothe their families or pay the rent, local businesses and small landlords hurt as well. It's a destructive approach rather than a constructive approach to development — pitting the interests of investors and higher-income populations over the needs of the larger number of poor and struggling citizens," Joe further explained.

Make the Ten-Point Program a Reality

CCBPP and *The Commemorator* need volunteers today to help fight for the class control needed to bring alive the Black Panther Party Ten Point Program and demand real community reconstruction, not capitalist destruction. CCBPP encourages anyone who cares to join in demanding real redevelopment for West Oakland and the cities like it across the nation. Contact Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party about on-the-job organizer training.

Editor's Note: Our article on redevelopment in West Oakland is the latest installment in a series covering the urban-removal-for-profit schemes

Continued on page 18

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Hilliard Bids for Office

Continued from page 13

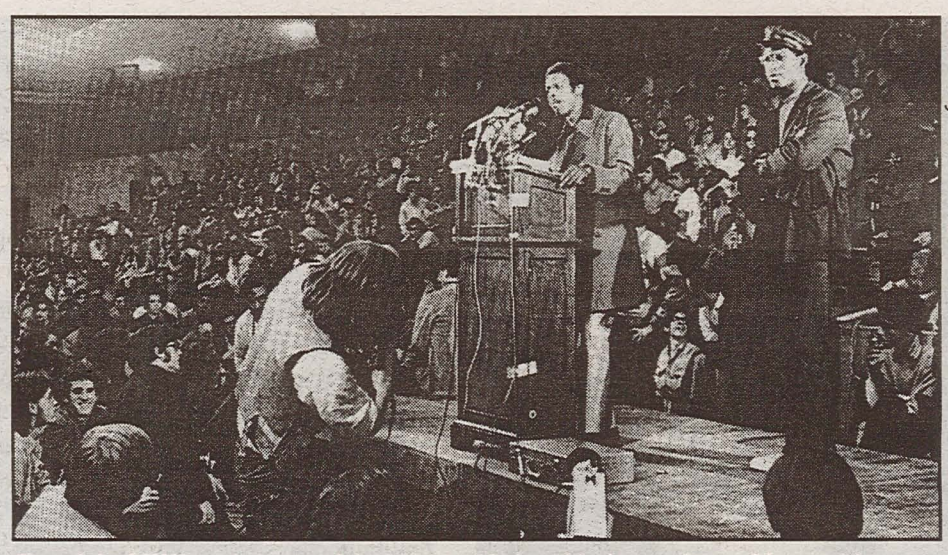
books that we give away. We do this monthly as a promotion of our campaign for literacy. This is consistent with the Black Panther Party program on education and survival.

We also do bus tours through the Huey Newton Foundation. The purpose of these bus tours is to educate the generation of people who don't have a clue as to what the Black Panther Party was. They think that Huey Newton is a cookie, a Fig Newton, or they think that the Black Panther Party started in New Orleans or somewhere. The reason for these bus tours is to remind this generation of youth who are far removed from that history that the origin of the Black Panther Party is in Oakland, California, and that the civil rights movement did not end with the death of Dr. King. There was a period in this history where the focus of this struggle shifted to California, that the Black Panther Party is a part of not only California history, but part of American history, part of the civil rights movement and the movement for liberation in America. So our bus tours are a conduit for that education. The Foundation has been involved in continuing that legacy through its free book giveaway, and through these legacy bus tours that we do each month. Because of the Foundation, Huey Newton's writings, which had not been in the public consciousness, have now emerged! They haven't been available to the public for over 25 or 26 years. *Revolutionary Suicide* has been republished, *To Die For the People* has been republished. We have a picture book called The Legacy of the Panthers with some 62 photographs that show our involvement with the community, not this negative kind of sensationalist imagery, with just the guns and all the rhetoric and no service to the community. So our Foundation is the Foundation that brings back the essence of what this Black Panther Party stood for. We're the guardians of that history.

Dickson: Another question that *The Commemorator* readers have raised is the status of the Huey P. Newton Archives.

Hilliard: It is the Huey Newton Archives.

Dickson: Some time ago there was a report about the Foundation, that materials were sold to Stanford University. What is that about?



Courtesy of David Hilliard

David Hilliard speaking at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut, 1970, during Black Panther trial.

Hilliard: There was some earlier talk about it in the establishment media, the *San Francisco Chronicle* and some local newspapers that ran a piece on it. Charles Aikens of the *Post* Newspaper did a piece on it. But we must review the history. First of all, you are right. It is not the Black Panther Archives, it is called the Huey Newton Collection. These are papers that came out of Fredricka Newton's basement. She conveyed them to the Huey Newton Foundation. The papers were sold to Stanford University specifically for research educational purposes. Stanford University does not own copyright, trademark or intellectual property rights to those documents. They only have them there for research purposes.

These are papers that came out of Fredricka Newton's basement.

The Huey P. Newton Foundation owns copyright, trademark to every picture, every piece of paper down at Stanford. I won't talk about the particulars of the deal with Stanford. We didn't get millions of dollars for those documents. As a matter of fact, we got a very small amount of money. The money was not the point in the first place, the point was to preserve those documents because they were being destroyed by becoming water-logged in Fredricka's basement. Pictures and documents were being thrown away. This was an attempt to preserve history so that my kids and your kids and future generations will have a record of our work. If I didn't do this we wouldn't be having this conversation now because most of us cannot even find a picture that associates us with that history.

I think that creating these archives at Stanford was one of the best and one of the more important things that I've done in my entire life because we will now be remembered as long as there will be universities. We, the Black Panther Party, will be recorded and preserved. Writers and biographers, regardless of how well meaning they are, write about us the way they want to, very subjectively, very erroneously. These documents are an account of the Black Panther Party history as shown in pictures, in tapes, our newspapers, manuscripts, our voices. This is a record of our work and it was very important to deposit them at Stanford. I think at some point we should do a more extensive dialogue on the papers at Stanford University and what this means. I would like to say I'm trying to establish a community-based research center similar to what's at Stanford so that people in the community can come and have access to the same stuff that the students have in the academic community at Stanford. So that is our new goal. First, to start a new office here, a research cultural center here at 19th and Telegraph. And I am looking forward to establishing an even broader presence for these documents, hopefully down at Merritt College, the origin and the home of the Black Panther Party.

Dickson: Why don't you give our readers some comments on the new Black Panther Party Cultural Research Center in downtown Oakland.

Hilliard: There's going to be a celebration opening up the Black Panther Cultural Research, and Families with a Future Center on Saturday, January 30, 1999. We are asking people to come by and browse. We're going to have courses, lectures on the Black Panther Party. We are going to have slides. You can come by there. There will be materials there. This is going to be the center, the source of information of the Panthers. Come by and meet Panther Party comrades. Bobby will be there when he comes to town, Ericka Huggins will be here, you, Melvin Dickson, John Seals, Steve McCutchen, Emory Douglas. This will be a place where people can come and touch a piece of that history and be in contact with the authentic people that made these things happen because we are still around and this will give us a presence in the community again.

Dickson: Let me close this out for this first session. I'd like to get back with you, as there is a tremendous amount more commentary I would like to get from you on topics of the Black Panther Party history, your book, (Hilliard: ...and books that are in the works) and your personal books.

Hilliard: We have many books in the works. We're going to do a book on you. We're going to publish books on Huey every three or four months. I have one out now that I can give you a copy of when we get together again. That's what we're about. That's what the Huey Newton Foundation is about. We're going to publish Huey Newton's Conversations with Eric Erickson, and republish Common Ground. There are about four manuscripts that Huey left behind and we're looking for publishers now. There are courses on the Black Panther Party through Merritt College, where you can get 3 credits, at McClymonds High School on Mondays from 3:00 to 4:30, at Castlemont on Mondays, from 6:00 to 9:00 and on Wednesdays at Expressions Gallery, from 6:30 to 9:30. This is on the legacy of the Black Panther Party – it's a sixteen week course and we review everything from the Civil Rights Movement to what we call the Liberation Party. When we deal with the Black Panther Party we deal with the origin of the Party, the basis of the 10 Point Program, the survival program, politics and the law, we get into COINTELPRO where we use Huey's dissertation, the FBI War against us, Women in the Black Panther Party. These are at Expressions Gallery every Wednesday at 9th and Washington (Oakland, CA). We invite everyone to come and share the history with us, to use the past to move to the present and build a bridge to the future.

All Power to the People!

Fight To Stop AB 1592

Continued from page 4

people into "choosing" physician-assisted suicide as their final "treatment" which costs as little as $35.

CCBPP organizers are mobilizing towards routing the bill when the state legislature reconvenes in January. "Our goal is the same as the Black Panther Party's goal was 32 years ago," stated Dickson. "As revolutionaries we learn to master all forms of struggle to build organization — that is why we adapt to the conditions at hand. We petition, phone, mail-out and circulate newsletters to those who want to fight for power."

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Commemorator photo

Commemorator staff works literature table at the April 24th Mumia Abu-Jamal Free Mumia Rally.

Rise of Black Conservatism

Continued from page 3

Eric Foner, in his remarkable *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution: 1863-1877* (New York: Harper, 1988), writes:

"Conservative ideas found their greatest support among the emerging class of black businessmen—the same group that would later supply the principal base for [Booker T.] Washington's ideology. Robert Gleed, a black merchant reportedly worth $15,000 in the early 1870's, served on the central committee of Mississippi's 1871 Planter's Convention. Other black landowners and entrepreneurs echoed the shibboleth that government should be 'carried on by the men of refinement,' and, especially with the advent of the depression, shared Democratic resentments about high taxes and state expenditures. After establishing a land and brokerage business in 1871, Martin R. Delany lectured blacks repeatedly on the harmony of interests between capital and labor and spoke out against carpetbaggers — representatives of 'the lowest grade of northern society.' Delany's increasingly conservative outlook blended personal economic interests, disappointed political ambition, and pessimism about the future. 'Utopian hopes for a permanent change in Southern life,' he counseled, 'should be abandoned; prosperity would eventually rule in South Carolina as it did elsewhere, and blacks should strike a deal with leading whites while they still retained significant bargaining power.'[p.546-7]

Conservatives, bred by the doctrine of their own oppression, become mouthpieces and echoes of those that wish the very worst for their kindred. It was, and is, a doctrine borne of loss, not of hope; it comes from hopelessness, not progression;' and it serves the interests of the wealthy and well-to-do, not those in need.

Once again, history shines light on the now.

West Oakland Fights for Future

Continued from page 16

ravaging cities across the nation. The 1990's brought a new onslaught of government attack on the poor and minority people in urban areas, with elected officials, agencies and speculators targeting our neighborhoods for destruction. The first four points of the BPP Ten Point Program —which called for self-determination in the low-income community, full employment, an end to the rip-off and robbery of our communities and decent housing — all come together in this fight.

In our December, 1998 issue we featured the so-called "anti-blighting" practices that were bringing financial ruin to the small businesses and poor residents of West Oakland. Slapping heavy cash fines on people unable to pay, the City then closes down businesses and homes they deem just too ugly for prospective new and higher-income residents that the City seeks to attract to West Oakland, displacing the poor and covering up poverty to appeal to a more moneyed class.

This activity in the birthplace of the BPP is significant for the whole country. Over the past several years, the Oakland example has been copied by municipal governments and profiteers in upstate New York. In 1993 officials in Syracuse passed a law modeled on the Oakland "nuisance" law, that will close a property down if there has been a certain frequency of arrests at the address. Buffalo has done the same and also uses civil lawsuits to declare "problem properties" a "nuisance." Since 1997, city codes in Rochester, New York have created a point system whereby property owners in violation of the local nuisance abatement law (which can include such things as a howling dog and littering) are threatened with closure of their property for one year. Even more dangerous is the Monroe County, New York initiative that tallies points in a nuisance point system against both landlords and tenants. This initiative allows the county to punish them by removing welfare benefits and vouchers — the livelihoods of these landlords and tenants — if they do not participate in a mandated Housing Council course.

This is a fight about life and livelihood, and this fight must be waged wherever it occurs.

Power to the People !

Behind Lewinsky

Continued from page 15

downsizing health care," but that is what he did.

Clinton promised to "end welfare as we know it." The implication was that the welfare recipients would get decent jobs and pay. They did not. Instead they took maintenance and civil servant jobs for less, which created budget surpluses for localities that were then handed over to a few billionaires. New York City made a $3 billion surplus via workfare. The city is giving Nasdaq and AMEX $300 million, and the New York Stock Exchange even more, to not move to New Jersey. The city and federal governments are funding a new stadium for the New York Yankees to the tune of at least $650 million. The surplus is not going to provide living wage jobs with benefits, including health care coverage, to New York City's low-income and minority population.

Their method is to take the anger of people towards the government and direct it against one individual on frivolous issues. This sets the terms so that the people decide for or against the issues and don't ever look beyond them. Most people didn't want Clinton removed because it wasn't going to improve their condition.

The government, backed by the news media, has systematically turned its back on the needs of poor and working Americans, and will not face the real problems of the nation. Instead, they just point the finger elsewhere — at Bill Clinton and Monica, Saddam Hussein, scapegoating individuals as a full-time diversionary tactic. Moreover, the majority of Americans are not being consulted. Clinton was voted in, but if he had been thrown out, it would have been against the will of most Americans.

In the space of three days, the United States and Great Britain dropped more cruise missiles, at a million dollars apiece, on Iraq than were dropped during the whole of the 1992 Persian Gulf War. And this on a country where, the United Nations estimates, a million Iraqi children are malnourished and 700,000 have died since 1990. Kissing up to the Palestinians, while bombing Iraq tactically, is meant to divide the Arab nations while exacerbating the ill-will between Israel and its neighbors.

While all these groupings are fighting each other, the United States and Britain have overridden the United Nations Security Council to take independent military action.

Russia, in alliance with Kazakhstan and a minority of international oil companies and countries, agreed on November 24, 1998 to build a multi-million dollar pipeline to the oil-rich Caspian sea region. In this race for oil, the United States and Turkey are pressing for the construction of separate pipelines from Baku to Turkey that would not pass through Russian territory.

This is the time for the United States-led interests to move, and they are — in Kosovo, the crux of the war revolves not around "ethnic conflict" as the media would have you believe, but around United States/NATO control of oil and other resources, and the containment of a starving Russia through military force. United States-led interests are taking these resources while Russia is propped up by 1.5 million tons of "free" wheat from the United States, and faces a direct military threat if it doesn't do what the Big Seven oil companies direct. The Kosovo region is one of the few terrains where ground forces could invade Russia.

Please note this is the same grain that farmers in the United States cannot sell because prices are so low. When the United States government bought the grain and sold it to Russia, US wheat prices went up, but not until after the remaining small farmers bit the dust; another example of the concentration of wealth in the hands of larger corporations, in this example, agribusiness. Another 1.5 million tons of food was sold by providing a 20-year loan, with interest, to Russia. Who paid for the free wheat? That money to buy the wheat came from the American taxpayers.

The Bill Clinton/Monica Lewinsky Show was not about impeachment. It was not about the fact that humans are sexual beings. It was not about lying about sex. It was about the concentration of capital into fewer hands while the quality of life declines rapidly for the working class of the United States as well as a majority of the working class internationally. It was about watching the staged impeachment performance while 10,400 jobs got cut from Citigroup, the LA Times dismissed 500 workers, and 9,000 workers lost their jobs as a result of the Exxon/Mobile merger which was just in the newspaper for one day. On average, 3,000 United States workers are losing their jobs daily, according to Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan.

Impeachment should have been about the 13.5 million children in the United States facing malnutrition, about tuberculosis rising 21% in Orange County, California, because nearly 44 million Americans have no health insurance. The State of California was able to save $54 million a month by cutting public assistance rolls by 100,000 from July,

Continued on page 20

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CCBPP STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Commemoration Committee for the Black Panther Party (CCBPP) is committed to the goals of the Black Panther Party (BPP) as outlined in its Ten-Point Program which was written in 1966 by Party founders, Dr. Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale.

The Ten-Point Program outlines goals and objectives toward changing conditions of economic exploitation and political oppression in all low-income and working class communities in the U.S. and elsewhere, as the basis for unity and solidarity.

Also, the CCBPP is committed to the concept of Revolutionary Intercommunalism, introduced by Dr. Newton in 1970 at Boston College. Our Revolutionary Intercommunalism holds that there are basically two sides. On one side there is reactionary intercommunalism which presently holds the world's low-income and working communities under conditions of economic exploitation and political oppression by controlling the wealth, resources and institutions in order to maximize profits for the few. Huey identified this side as the leading reactionary side (the ruling class) which consists of a minority, fewer than five percent of the world population. Under these conditions, reactionary intercommunalism, by and large, keeps the poor and working communities on a cycle of degradation, under conditions of reaction, desperation and poverty, with no end in sight. Newton understood that in order to change these conditions and advance the economic and cultural interests of these oppressed communities of the world, disciplined organizations must be built from the bottom up, enabling these low-income and working communities to fight exploitation and oppression by any means necessary (this fight needs to start in the advanced industrialized U.S. because our nation leads the world in political reaction and economic exploitation).

CCBPP advances and upholds the goals which the BPP outlined in its Ten-Point Program, and those goals are about ridding black ghettos and low-income and working communities of economic exploitation and political oppression, understanding that we can reach these goals only by seizing the time at the point of practice.

Black Panther Party Ten-Point Program
WHAT WE WANT, WHAT WE BELIEVE

1. WE WANT FREEDOM, WE WANT POWER TO DETERMINE THE DESTINY OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES. We believe that Black and oppressed people will not be free until we are able to determine our destinies in our own communities ourselves, by fully controlling all the institutions that exist in our communities.

2. WE WANT FULL EMPLOYMENT FOR OUR PEOPLE. We believe that the federal government is responsible and obligated to give every person employment or a guaranteed income. We believe that if the American businessmen will not give full employment, then the technology and means of production should be taken from the businessmen and placed in the community so that the people of the community can organize and employ all its people and give a high standard of living.

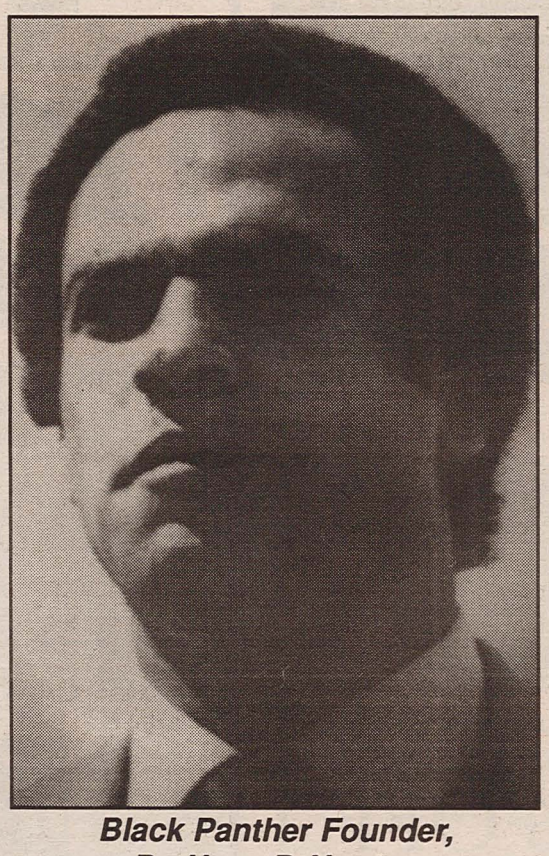
3. WE WANT AN END TO THE ROBBERY BY THE CAPITALIST OF OUR BLACK AND OPPRESSED COMMUNITIES. We believe that the racist government has robbed us and now we are demanding the overdue debt of forty acres and two mules. Forty acres and two mules were promised 100 years ago as restitution for slave labor and mass murder of Black people. We will accept the payment in currency that will be distributed to our many communities. The American racist has taken part in the slaughter of over fifty million Black people. Therefore, we feel this is a modest demand that we make.

4. WE WANT DECENT HOUSING, FIT FOR THE SHELTER OF HUMAN BEINGS. We believe that if the landlords will not give decent housing to our Black and oppressed communities, then housing and the land should be made into cooperatives so that the people on our communities, with government aid, can build and make decent housing for the people.

5. WE WANT EDUCATION FOR OUR PEOPLE THAT EXPOSES THE TRUE NATURE OF THIS DECADENT AMERICAN SOCIETY. WE WANT EDUCATION THAT TEACHES US OUR TRUE HISTORY AND OUR ROLE IN THE PRESENT-DAY SOCIETY. We believe in an educational system that will give to our people a knowledge of self. If you do not have knowledge of yourself and your position in the society and the world, then you will have little chance to know anything else.

6. WE WANT COMPLETELY FREE HEALTH CARE FOR ALL BLACK AND OPPRESSED PEOPLE. We believe that the government must provide, free of charge, for the people, health facilities that will not only treat our illnesses, most of which have come about as a result of our oppression, but will also develop preventive medical programs to guarantee our future survival. We believe that mass health education and research programs must be developed to give all Black and oppressed people access to advanced scientific and medical information, so we may provide ourselves with proper medical attention and care.

7. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO POLICE BRUTALITY AND MURDER OF BLACK PEOPLE, OTHER PEOPLE OF COLOR, ALL OPPRESSED PEOPLE INSIDE THE UNITED STATES. We believe that the racist and fascist government of the United States uses its domestic enforcement agencies to carry out its program of oppression against Black people, other people of color, and poor people inside the United States. We believe it is our right, therefore, to defend ourselves against such armed forces and that all Black and oppressed people should be armed for self-defense of our homes and communities against these fascist police forces.



Black Panther Founder, Dr. Huey P. Newton

8. WE WANT AN IMMEDIATE END TO ALL WARS OF AGGRESSION. We believe that the various conflicts which exist around the world stem directly from the aggressive desires of the U. S. ruling circle and government to force its domination upon the oppressed people of the world. We believe that if the U. S. government or its lackeys do not cease these aggressive wars that it is the right of the people to defend themselves by any means necessary against their aggressors.

9. WE WANT FREEDOM FOR ALL BLACK AND POOR OPPRESSED PEOPLE NOW HELD IN U. S. FEDERAL, STATE, COUNTY, CITY, AND MILITARY PRISONS AND JAILS. WE WANT TRIALS BY A JURY OF PEERS FOR ALL PERSONS CHARGED WITH SO-CALLED CRIMES UNDER THE LAWS OF THIS COUNTRY. We believe that the many Black and poor oppressed people now held in U. S. prisons and jails have not received fair and impartial trials under a racist and fascist judicial system and should be free from incarceration. We believe in the ultimate elimination of all wretched, inhuman penal institutions, because the masses of men and women imprisoned inside the United States or by the U. S. military are the victims of oppressive conditions that are the real cause of their imprisonment. We believe that when persons brought to trial that they must be guaranteed, by the United States, juries of their peers, attorneys of their choice and freedom from imprisonment while awaiting trials.

10. WE WANT LAND, BREAD, HOUSING, EDUCATION, CLOTHING, JUSTICE, PEACE AND PEOPLE'S COMMUNITY CONTROL OF MODERN TECHNOLOGY. When, in the course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume, among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the laws of nature and nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That, to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and, accordingly, all experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But, when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism. It is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.

Eddie Conway

Continued from page 5

fact, at the time of Conway's arrest, the only evidence against him was the report of one Officer Nolan who chased and exchanged shots with "someone" running into a dark alley a few blocks from the incident. There was no direct evidence to link Conway with the shootings on the night of April 24, 1970.

The prosecution built its frame-up against Baltimore Panther leader Eddie Conway in several ways. One of two men apprehended with a weapon, in his possession near the murder scene the night of the shooting, Jack Johnson, received immunity from prosecution in return for implicating Conway in the crime. The .38 Johnson was carrying when he was arrested was consistent with the .38 bullet found in the Baltimore officer's skull. The prosecution also used the "stacked deck" method of identification. Officer Nolan was shown two sets of photos with Eddie Conway's picture, his being the only one common to both sets.

The most disputed piece of evidence was the testimony of a prisoner who was placed in Conway's cell for four days. This man, Charles Reynolds, on his way to prison in Michigan, claimed that Conway confessed to him; the confession provided the only incriminating testimony other than that of the police officer. Reynolds then asked for a favorable recommendation to the Michigan Parole Board in exchange for his testimony.

Without adequate legal defense, Marshall Eddie Conway was railroaded into prison. He was sentenced to life imprisonment plus 30 years.

On December 9, 1995, over 300 supporters turned out at Dunbar High School for an Eddie Conway rally, featuring Acklyn Lynck, University of Maryland Baltimore County African American Studies Chair and noted author, the Sankofa Dance Company of Baltimore, and many others.

Free Eddie Conway Campaign

In the first year (June 1995-96) of the campaign to "Free Eddie Conway," the Support Committee held seminars, fund-raisers, lectures, distributed tens of thousands of leaflets, and hundreds of information packages. Support continued with many hours of radio programming, petition drives, political prisoner conferences, 11 hours of video, a number of newspaper articles, a Web Site on the Internet, rallies in other states, and supporters in seven states.

Funds are needed to help the committee's work to win freedom for Eddie Conway. Please send letters to Maryland Governor Parris Glendening (who has stated that he will 'DENY' parole for practically all prisoners serving life sentences), and to the Maryland Parole Board, in support of Eddie's petition for parole addressed to:
THE EDDIE MARSHALL CONWAY SUPPORT COMMITTEE
Post Office Box 41144
Baltimore, Maryland 21203-6144
Telephone Number 410-276-7221

All Power to the People

Behind Lewinsky

Continued from page 18

1997 through April, 1998. Impeachment should have been about how New York City saved money and got a budget surplus by replacing 20,000 employees with workfare recipients. It should have been about 500 billionaires controlling the world while immobilizing the working class, setting them fighting amongst themselves. It was not about sex. After all, Monica Lewinsky didn't get fucked, but the American people did!

All Power to the People

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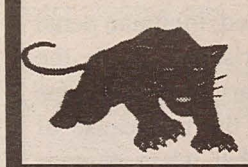

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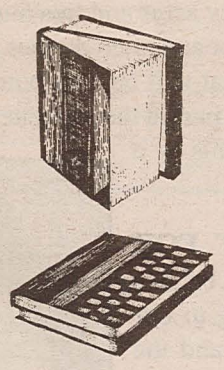

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Mariposa Grove

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